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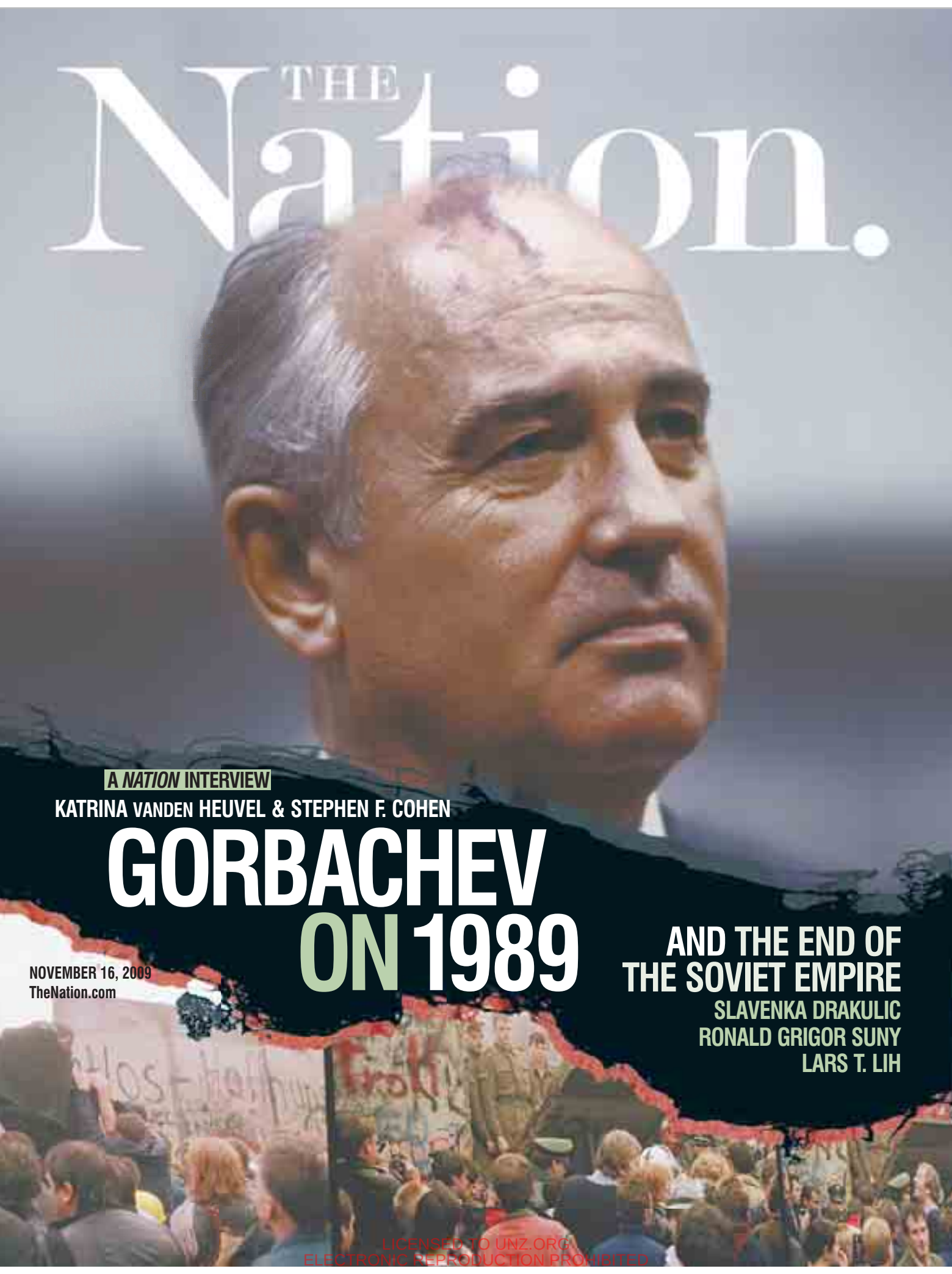

A *NATION* INTERVIEW

KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL & STEPHEN F. COHEN

GORBACHEV ON 1989

AND THE END OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE

SLAVENKA DRAKULIC
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NOVEMBER 16, 2009
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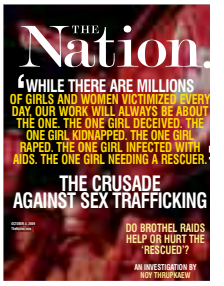
THE Nation.
"WHILE THERE ARE MILLIONS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN VICTIMIZED EVERY DAY, OUR WORK WILL ALWAYS BE ABOUT THE ONE. THE ONE GIRL DECEIVED. THE ONE GIRL KIDNAPPED. THE ONE GIRL RAPED. THE ONE GIRL INFECTED WITH AIDS. THE ONE GIRL NEEDING A RESCUER."
THE CRUSADE AGAINST SEX TRAFFICKING
DO BROTHEL RAIDS HELP OR HURT THE 'RESCUED'?
AN INVESTIGATION BY NOY THRUPKAEW

Saving Sex-Trafficking Victims

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Noy Thrupkaew's two-part series, "The Crusade Against Sex Trafficking" [Oct. 5 and 26], focuses on the work of the International Justice Mission (IJM). Unfortunately, the articles present almost none of the facts or views shared with her in more than twenty hours of interviews conducted with IJM senior staff in three countries. In addition, they contain numerous inaccuracies and mischaracterizations of IJM's work. In the interest of a fair and informed dialogue about sex trafficking, I offer the following clarifications:

§ Today virtually every credible anti-trafficking organization—including UN agencies, NGOs and responsible governments—agrees that engagement with law enforcement is the best and only sustainable way to protect victims and apprehend perpetrators of sex trafficking. Corruption within police forces should not be a reason to deny trafficking victims the enforcement of laws designed to protect them, as the article suggests; it should be a strong argument to train and build capacity (as IJM has done for hundreds of officers around the globe).

§ IJM's aftercare protocols for sex trafficking victims are widely considered to be state-of-the-art by anti-trafficking professionals. Thrupkaew falsely suggests that IJM "abandons" victims after rescue. IJM's in-country social workers partner with aftercare organizations on the ground to secure shelter, medical care, psychological assistance and schooling or job training for trafficking survivors.

§ IJM does not "raid" brothels and as an NGO has no authority to do so. IJM provides investigative support and, when requested by the local police, offers technical assistance on police-initiated, court-approved enforcement of national anti-trafficking laws. When possible, IJM provides social work support during such operations to ensure excellent treatment of victims and non-victims impacted by the police intervention.

Given the scope and urgency of the issue—to rescue thousands of children and trafficked women from lives of sexual slavery and rape—it is unfortunate to see *The Nation* manufacturing controversy rather than mobilizing efforts or encouraging dialogue. The dedicated staff of NGOs, governments and police agencies who stand on the front lines of the battle against child sex trafficking, and the victims they serve, deserve better (interested readers, please go to ijm.org/ijmnews/afalsecontroversy).

AMY E. ROTH, *director, media relations*
International Justice Mission

ARLINGTON, VA.

Readers should know about a recent investigation and operation conducted in Siem Reap, Cambodia, by the local police and IJM. This is the latest in IJM's casework in Asia, which has secured freedom and aftercare for more than 1,000 minor girls and trafficked adult women, the arrest of more than 500 suspects and convictions of more than 130 perpetrators.

In September an IJM operative received information about a karaoke bar in Siem Reap, where managers sequestered about a dozen girls for sexual exploitation by customers. Most of the girls were under 18, the youngest 14. IJM investigators contacted the provincial Cambodian Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police (AHTJP), and between October 2 and 4 IJM investigators made several visits to the bar, posing as customers to gain access to the youngest girls and secure evidence of their age and circumstances. They provided this to the AHTJP, which prepared reports for the local prosecutor, who then issued warrants. On October 5 an operation was conducted that resulted in the rescue of twelve victims and the arrest of the brothel owner. The following morning, another suspect was arrested in a nearby city.

IJM aftercare staff, who accompanied the victims during their police interviews, learned that many of the victims were severely beaten regularly; some had scars to prove it. Photos show a small, windowless, dirty "prison" where the girls were kept

(continued on page 24)

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Break Up the Banks

As the battle over financial reform takes shape, it's become clear there are essentially three camps. The first, represented by the American Bankers Association, which convened in Chicago for its annual conference in October, is the do-nothing camp. Oh sure, ABA's Ed Yingling will say he favors reform and offer warm platitudes to that effect. But if they had their druthers, bankers wouldn't change a thing. Why would they? They now capture all the gains from the risks they take and shoulder few of the costs.

EDITORIAL

The second camp, which includes the White House and Federal Reserve chair Ben Bernanke, more or less accepts the financial landscape as it is, dominated by a handful of mega-banks like Goldman Sachs, Citigroup and Bank of America, and seeks to contain volcanic disruptions like those that brought about the crisis. The proposals on offer from the White House and Barney Frank's House Financial Services Committee would limit risk through stronger capital requirements, give the Fed the ability to facilitate the bankruptcy of large firms, regulate and standardize exotic securities, and create a much-needed new Consumer Financial Protection Agency to root out predatory and deceptive practices.

The third camp argues that while these measures are worthy, they're not enough. The heart of our predicament is the Too Big to Fail (TBTF) problem. Banks have grown so large that they can't go down without threatening the whole system. Reforming the financial sector thus means breaking up TBTF conglomerates and reinstating the Glass-Steagall Act, with its firewall between investment and commercial banking.

The media have labeled the break-up-the-banks camp as the most "liberal" or "left" option, the bankers' position as the most conservative (also the one the GOP in Congress will courageously defend) and the White House position as the sensible, Goldilocks compromise.

But while critics of reinstating Glass-Steagall dismiss it as wildly impractical, it is supported by a roster of people who hardly count as liberals: John Reed, former head of Citigroup; Mervyn King, governor of the Bank of England; and, most notably and vocally, Paul Volcker, ex–Fed chair and current chair of the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board.

This isn't surprising, since the insight at the core of Volcker et al.'s proposal comes from the conservative Chicago School of economics. It was, after all, Milton Friedman's colleague George Stigler who developed the theory of "regulatory capture" to describe the ways regulators are subverted or co-opted by the industries they oversee. Given the likelihood that, over time, new regulations will be subject to these forces, it makes sense to supplement regulatory reforms with legal limits on the size and scope (and thus potential damage) of the firms in question. "The banks are there to serve the public," Volcker told the *New York Times* recently. "And that is what they should concentrate on. These other activities create conflicts of interest."

The results of these "conflicts of interest" were apparent in the streets of Chicago, where victims of the subprime swindle and subsequent financial crisis joined thousands of protesters to make sure the bankers assembled there got to see up close just how much havoc they had wrought and how much anger there is in its wake. The key question, as Congress begins to craft reforms, is whether that anger can be organized and brought to bear on the legislative process. Otherwise, all the Paul Volckers in the world won't matter.

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This week at TheNation.com

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Gregory Kaufmann: More outrAIGe

Barbara Crossette: Putting caste on notice

Helen Rosenthal: What if campaign finance reform took a page from baseball's playbook?

The Notion Esther Kaplan: Bankers face their victims in Chicago

Betsy Reed: Palin, rogue or rouge?

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Deficit Hawk Hysteria

The deficit hawks are flapping their wings and making a terrible squawk about the government's gusher of red ink. Good grief, a federal deficit of $1.4 trillion! What will become of us?

The gloom chorus includes GOP heavies and right-wing frothers, the editors of the *Washington Post* and other pinch-penny establishment journals, Blue Dog Democrats and even some of Barack Obama's own advisers. Never mind the bloody mess we're in, they insist. People should hunker down and accept their pain. Suffering is good for the soul.

COMMENT

This nonsense, grounded in ignorance and discredited nineteenth-century bromides, is a recipe for continuing the economy's downward spiral and could prove poisonous for the country. The hawks claim self-righteous rectitude in their warnings, but their real intent is to stymie the very spending programs that can deliver economic recovery and relief to battered citizens. Whining about deficits is a way to halt promising talk about another substantial stimulus package, one that should be focused more concretely on job creation. That will require more deficit financing, for sure; but at a time when unemployment hovers near 10 percent and foreclosures are in hemorrhage, more is needed.

In an October 21 editorial arguing against just such additional spending, the *Post* warned citizens to disregard progressive commentators (like myself) who offer the example of World War II, when the government ran deficits many times larger than the current one. "In the deficit debates to come," the *Post* insisted, "Mr. Obama should heed the hawks."

Wrong. The mobilization for World War II produced one of the most remarkable success stories in US economic history. War production not only overcame lingering weaknesses from the Great Depression but transformed the economic system into the modern powerhouse that became the platform for our long-running postwar prosperity. All this was achieved by the government, largely with borrowed money. By war's end Washington had piled up federal debt totaling around 120 percent of annual GDP (nearly double today's debt level).

During the wartime emergency the government took charge of the economy and rapidly shifted the industrial system to armaments while suppressing domestic consumption. Deficit spending force-fed the rapid development of new technologies and new basic industries. In a few short years, economic output expanded by about 75 percent. Despite rationing and wage and price controls, Americans at large were replenished: per capita income rose by almost 70 percent (with industrial jobs opened to women and blacks), and since people could not consume much, the savings rate reached extraordinary levels—23 percent of incomes. The government borrowed these savings and spent them in the national interest. The store of personal savings fueled the pent-up consumer demand driving postwar prosperity.

The United States needs something similar today—a jump-shift in economic strategy that redirects private capital and incomes into public investment for industrial renewal and for

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greater social protections, while households are allowed to dig out of their debts and restore personal savings. In economic terms, the nation is much weaker today than it was in the 1940s—indebted and dependent on foreign creditors. We will not in any case return to the "happy days" prosperity that followed World War II. But the nation needs another dramatic jolt—a strategy that addresses the depth of our predicament and gets serious about the solutions.

To ensure recovery, the Obama administration may need to launch public employment programs—directly creating jobs when the private economy can't seem to. It can beef up environmental construction and jobs like weatherizing buildings for greater energy efficiency. It can pour bigger bucks into building high-speed rail systems. It can finance smaller firms that are innovating with green technologies and create market demand by purchasing their products.

Far from proposing deep restructuring, Obama and his lieutenants are instead predicting prosperity right around the corner. They are going to be disappointed. As the severity of our condition becomes clearer to people, events may drag the president toward considering more drastic actions. Certainly, public support will build for more fundamental solutions. The usual influential voices will insist there's nothing Americans can do but accept our fate. People and politicians must have the nerve to ignore them.

Let's hope President Obama and the political community brush aside the deficit hysteria and do what they need to do to restore the economy: that is, spend more money—a *lot* more

Noted.

A REAL VOTE FIX: The bitter experience of the contested 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, and more than a few conflicted results on lower ballot lines, made most progressives passionate supporters of election reform. The Democratic victories of 2006 and 2008 tempered the passions. But FairVote's **Rob Richie** reminds us that the way we vote remains "highly problematic, with straightforward problems."

The problems have been on display this fall. In Albuquerque's early October mayoral election, a pair of Latino Democrats split 6 percent of the vote, allowing a white Republican to "win" with 44 percent. "In a traditional runoff or an instant runoff, the Republican almost certainly would have lost," notes Richie. The November 3 New Jersey gubernatorial election could produce a similar result, with an independent candidate attracting enough support to deprive the winner of a majority. Then there is the case of the exceptionally low-turnout New York City municipal primary runoff in September, which saw candidates for top jobs in the largest US city nominated with support from less than 2 percent of its eligible voters.

Calls for reform are being sounded in New Mexico, New York and New Jersey, as editorial writers and reformers are embracing proposals for instant runoff voting. Under IRV, voters rank candidates; if no one secures a majority, the candidate with the fewest number of first-preference rankings is eliminated and his or her votes are redistributed until a majority winner is identified. San Francisco and Burlington, Vermont, already have IRV systems; Minneapolis joins them this fall. If voters in St. Paul and Lowell, Massachusetts, back IRV referendums in November, those cities will implement similar systems. Minnesota State Senator **Mee Moua**, one of the first members of the Hmong community elected to office in the United States and a big backer of IRV in St. Paul, notes the reform's potential to expand turnout, empower minorities and foster majority rule. "The effects of IRV are huge, and I believe it is one of the best changes in our voting system since the Voting Rights Act of 1964." JOHN NICHOLS

PLANET PROTEST: A nascent international climate-justice movement gained significant momentum on October 24, when reportedly hundreds of thousands of people gathered in 181 countries, calling attention to the urgency of reducing the emissions that are causing global warming. Organizers from **350.org**, which coordinated the **International Day of Climate Action**, are calling it the most widespread one-day political protest in history. More than 5,000 events occurred throughout the day on every continent, including Antarctica.

Author and 350.org co-founder **Bill McKibben** told *The Nation*: "350 ppm is what scientists say is the safest amount of carbon in the atmosphere for sustaining human existence. The odd thing about the day was that it was centered around an obscure data point—not around celebrities or politicians but around understanding the scientific significance of 350 and taking action."

The protests occurred just forty-four days before representatives from 192 nations, various UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations will meet in Copenhagen to negotiate a climate agreement to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Ninety-four countries, as well as the head of the UN's **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**, have endorsed the goal of bringing atmospheric carbon levels down from their current level of nearly 390 ppm to 350 ppm. Yet the world's greatest carbon emitters, like the United States and China, remain resistant to any binding cuts.

"Clearly Copenhagen is not going to produce an agreement that the science demands," says McKibben. "But we need to make sure that we push the issue. We need to do movement-building." ROB ESHELMAN

FRANCO'S FOE: **Clarence Kailin**, who died on October 25 at 95 in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin, was one of the last of the remarkable American radicals who fought "the good fight" against Spanish fascism as a member of the **Abraham Lincoln Brigade**. Kailin lived long enough to hear blowhards like **Sarah Palin** and **Glenn Beck** conflate socialism and fascism in their attacks on President Obama. Kailin, a lifelong socialist, recalled earlier this year, "I'm old enough to remember when Hitler, Mussolini and Franco were on the rise. When no one else would take on the fascists, when the conservatives were talking about what a great guy Franco was, we socialists went to Spain to try and stop him." JOHN NICHOLS

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money—and run up even larger deficits for some years to come. The time to pay down the deficit will come only after the economy recovers. If politicians surrender to the budget scolds, the nation will be stuck in this ditch for a long, long time.

WILLIAM GREIDER

Big League Blues

COMMENT

When Rush Limbaugh was unceremoniously dumped in his efforts to secure a share of the St. Louis Rams, he may have been little more than collateral damage in a brewing collision between NFL owners and the NFL Players Association. After the union raised objections, NFL commissioner Roger Goodell squashed Limbaugh like a water bug. Given the potential conflict between NFL management and labor, Rush was a public relations disaster Goodell could hardly afford.

The collective bargaining agreement is due to expire at the end of the 2009–10 season, and all signs are that an era of labor/management partnership is not at hand. As *Sports Illustrated* senior writer Peter King wrote in late October, "It's going to get ugly. There's better than a 50 percent chance, I believe, of some work stoppage in 2011, as incredibly golden-goose-killing as that sounds."

The negotiations will occur in the context of a new study showing that retired NFL players suffer from Alzheimer's disease and the early onset of dementia at five times the national rate—nineteen times for men under 50. Congressional hearings on football head injuries were held on October 28. Both Goodell and NFLPA president DeMaurice Smith will be pressed to address this during the upcoming negotiations.

But that will require a spirit of cooperation that may not exist. The issues that separate the two sides seem minor: the union wants more financial transparency while owners want to dial back concessions they made under the last contract, including giving players a greater share of the revenue. But the two main sources of tension aren't on the bargaining table. The first is the economy. The NFL, long thought to be recession-proof, is feeling the squeeze. In the best of times, football is a blue-collar game at white-collar prices. But this year attendance has dropped, in part because some teams have raised ticket prices in the midst of a deep recession. A family of four, purchasing modestly from the concessions, now has to pay more than $400 to see a game. The result is that empty seats dot stadiums around the country. This leads to blackouts in the local TV markets. In 2008 only nine games were blacked out during the entire season. In 2009 Jacksonville alone has already announced that it will most likely have to black out all eight of its home games. The league will want to cut costs in this difficult climate, and the union will feel a need to hold the line. The golden goose has clearly lost a bit of its luster.

The NFL is only the highest-profile example of the economic crisis pervading the world of sports. The league's red-headed stepchild, the Arena Football League, had to cancel its last season. After more than half the Major League Baseball teams raised average ticket prices this year, twenty-two of thirty saw attendance drop. And the Ladies Professional Golf Association has seen the flight of corporate sponsorships, while the Women's National Basketball Association has reduced roster spots in anticipation of declining revenue.

The men's NBA has looked particularly vulnerable in the current climate. The league took out a $200 million line of credit to aid financially ailing teams. Commissioner David Stern tried to spin this as a sign of the league's health, but few were fooled. The NBA is also due for contract negotiations after the 2010-11 season, which could make the NFL battle look tepid by comparison.

While the dire economy is the primary reason to bet against labor peace in the NFL, another good one is NFLPA president Smith himself. The Players Association is generally seen as the weakest of the sports unions. The NFL is the only league without guaranteed contracts. Smith, who was elected in March after the sudden death of Gene Upshaw, wants to show that despite not being a former player he will be strong for his players. Upon assuming leadership he said, "There isn't a day where I don't hope for peace, but at the same time, there isn't a day where we won't prepare for war." Smith has told ESPN that he has called upon his players to put aside 25 percent of their salaries over the next two years. "I look at the way in which it looks like we're moving to this lockout, and first and foremost, we have to be in a position where our young men are in a position to be able to take care of themselves and their families," he said.

This combative stance, along with declining revenues, is signaling to many an NFL-watcher that the golden goose might soon be cooked.

DAVE ZIRIN

Dave Zirin, The Nation's sports correspondent, is the author of A People's History of Sports in the United States.

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

'U.S. Will Order Pay Cuts at Firms With Bailout Aid'

—The New York Times

The government has moved to intervene
To make the pay scale slightly less obscene.
The Wall Street types consider this unfair.
They say they earned their money fair and square,
And 20 million, say, is only middling
For someone who's so good at money fiddling.
Of course, if things again go not as planned,
They're back to Washington with hat in hand.
These fiddlers do deserve some admiration:
They've found themselves a win-win situation.

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Ten Things.

Ten Things You Can Do to Reduce Incarceration

The United States has 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's prisoners. Criminologists have found that when too many people are incarcerated, the crime rate actually increases. Prisons cost us $60 billion a year; imagine if we spent some of that money on education, job training and healthcare. Paul Butler, a law professor, former federal prosecutor and author of *Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice* (letsgetfreethebook.com), suggests ways to undo the damage caused by over-incarceration. Check out "Ten Things" online for more resources.

1 Do your jury duty. If you are a juror in a nonviolent drug case, vote "not guilty." Jury nullification—an acquittal based on principle—is perfectly legal. The framers intended jurors to be a check on unjust prosecutions and bad laws. For more, see drugpolicy.org/law/marijuana/jurynull.

2 Pay a kid to graduate. A report by the RAND Corporation found that paying students to finish high school prevented more crime than the toughest sentencing laws. Dropping out of school creates a high risk of ending up in jail. Work with your community group to create a program to pay at-risk students to graduate from high school.

3 Come out of the closet about your drug use. "War on drugs" propaganda says users are bad people. Let your fellow citizens know the real face of the American drug user. Don't be scared. Barack Obama admitted he used marijuana and cocaine during his youth, and he got elected president!

4 Hire a formerly incarcerated person. Every year about 600,000 people get out of jail. The odds are against their landing a job, a huge factor in why more than half will be rearrested within a year. Go to hirenetwork.org and click on "Employer Resources." If you have been incarcerated, click on "Resources and Assistance," or go to reentrypolicy.org and click on the US map.

5 Vote for politicians who are smart on crime. Tougher sentences aren't the answer. In the United States, criminal sentences are twice as long as those in England, three times those in Canada and five to ten times those in France. Yet crime rates in US cities are higher than in those nations.

6 Just say no to the police. When cops request your consent to pat you down, peek inside your backpack or purse or search your car, you have the right to decline. When they have a warrant or other legal cause to search, as at an airport, they don't have to ask. Too many Americans—especially in communities of color—are scared to death of the police. Go to aclu.org/police/gen/14528res20040730.html to learn your rights if stopped by the police.

7 Don't be a professional snitch. If you have information about a violent or property crime, call the police. Witnessing is fine. But snitches get paid either in cash or with a break in their own prosecution for tattling. They make untrustworthy witnesses. Snitches are responsible for almost half the wrongful convictions of people who were later found to be innocent.

8 Talk up the trades. Retail drug-selling pays about as much as working at McDonald's. As the book *Freakonomics* points out, that's why most drug dealers live with their moms. Many dealers would prefer a more lucrative—and safer—line of work. People who don't see themselves as "college material" and might otherwise end up on the street should be encouraged to get training for a blue-collar trade. See reentrypolicy.org/resources/links for information.

9 Support reforms that let accused people discover the evidence against them. There are very few discovery requirements in criminal law. Many defendants in criminal cases don't see witnesses' statements—or even get copies of police reports—until the trial. "Open discovery" rules like the one being considered by the Ohio Supreme Court will enable criminal defendants to see the state's evidence before trial. See ohioopendiscovery.com.

10 Listen to hip-hop. No other aspect of pop culture has considered as carefully, and as personally, the costs and benefits of the American punishment regime. Members of the hip-hop nation often come from the most dangerous communities and have a vested interest in safety. They help us understand that treating people who have messed up with love and dignity is, for law-abiding citizens, an act of self-interest and community safety. Visit allhiphop.com or hiphopcaucus.org to learn about the political side of hip-hop.

CONCEIVED BY WALTER MOSLEY with research by Rae Gomes

"Ten Things" is a monthly feature. Readers who wish to propose ideas for it should e-mail NationTenThings@gmail.com.

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Alexander Cockburn

The Right to Remain Naked?

Just how funny was that story of the man in Fairfax County, Virginia, who got up early on the morning of October 19 and walked naked into his own kitchen to make himself a cup of coffee? The next significant thing that happened to 29-year-old Eric Williamson was the local cops arriving to charge him with indecent exposure. It turns out that while he was brewing the coffee, a mother who was taking her 7-year-old son along a path beside Williamson's house espied the naked Williamson and called the local precinct, or more likely her husband, who happens to be a cop.

"Yes, I wasn't wearing any clothes," Williamson said later, "but I was alone, in my own home and just got out of bed. It was dark and I had no idea anyone was outside looking in at me."

The story ended up on TV, starting with Fox, and in the opening rounds the newscasters and network blogs had merciless sport with the Fairfax police for their absurd behavior. Hasn't a man the right to walk around his own home (or, in this case, rented accommodations) dressed according to his fancy? Answer, obvious to anyone familiar with relevant case law: absolutely not.

Peeved by public ridicule, the Fairfax cops turned up the heat. The cop's wife started to maintain that first she saw Williamson by a glass kitchen door, then through the kitchen window. Mary Ann Jennings, a Fairfax County Police spokeswoman, stirred the pot of innuendo: "We've heard there may have been other people who had a similar incident." The cops are asking anyone who may have seen an unclothed Williamson through his windows to come forward, even if it was at a different time. They've also been papering the neighborhood with fliers, asking for reports on any other questionable activities by anyone resembling Williamson—a white guy who's a commercial diver and who has a 5-year-old daughter, not living with him.

I'd say that if the cops keep it up, and some prosecutor scents opportunity, Williamson will be pretty lucky if they don't throw some cobbled-up indictment at him. Toss in a jailhouse snitch making his own plea deal, a faked police lineup, maybe an artist's impression of the Fairfax Flasher, and Williamson could end up losing his visitation rights and, worse comes to worst, getting ten years plus being posted for life on some sex-offender site. You think we're living in the twenty-first century, in the clinical fantasy world of *CSI*? Wrong. So far as forensic evidence is concerned, we remain planted in the seventeenth century with trial by ordeal, such as when they killed women as witches if they floated when thrown into a pond.

Let's head north from Fairfax County to Massachusetts, home of the witch trials. How about if you're white in Boston (wise decision), weigh yourself in your own bedroom with no clothes on and… But let my Boston friend pick up the story, because it happened to him.

"It was the early '90s. Early on Xmas eve two burly cops pushed into our house and invaded our bedroom—no warrant. They only backed off after they realized that the scale in our bedroom where I weighed myself was in front of a window. To see me there the born-agains who moved in next door (actually on the far side of a vacant lot separating us) had to keep a tight watch since it does not take long to weigh oneself.

"My girlfriend was dressing in the bedroom and my mom and stepdaughter were visiting. By the time the cops understood that I had been weighing myself every morning, the paddy wagon was there ready to take me away.

"I would have sued them but I was running for Congress at the time. The cops liked my opponent, a right-wing pro-lifer, and I have always thought that had something to do with their moral diligence that day. One of the cops, the chief, later resigned in a corruption scandal."

Now this was in the early 1990s, please note. This was when the wave of hysteria over satanic abuse of children was in full spate, with people being imprisoned for life on just the sort of "evidence" the cops are now trying to marshal against Williamson. Massachusetts actually saw the first trial of a daycare teacher charged with satanic abuse. Bernard Baran was released after nearly twenty-two years and exonerated three years after that, on June 9 of this year. As attorney Mike Snedeker, who wrote with Debbie Nathan the 1995 book *Satan's Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt*, recently reminded us on the *CounterPunch* website, there are victims of that hysteria, almost certainly innocent, still rotting in prison: Fran and Danny Keller in Texas, James Toward and Francisco Fuster in Florida almost a generation later.

Among the many brilliant observations of Morse Peckham in his 1969 book *Art and Pornography: An Experiment in Explanation* (written under the auspices of Alfred Kinsey's Institute for Sex Research) was that the concern with sexual behavior has nothing to do with sex but everything to do with policing. American sexual prudery is part of political and social policing within the nominally legal context of supposed individual freedom. People learn to be prudish about sex before they understand anything else in society, and this prudery is transferred to other areas later that are even more important for social control and stability. The control of sex and pornography is a major part of promulgating a puritanical political culture without ever imposing an overt censorship regime. Sexual repression, often through the allegation of "deviant" fantasy crimes, is the designated stand-in for violations of the social order that are hard to crush in a courtroom. The function of many sexual crimes is to advertise threats to the established order on the rationale of supposed personal deviance and not on any actual material challenge. ■

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Katha Pollitt

Working Women: Strength in Numbers

What a difference a recession makes. It seems like only yesterday the media were heralding the mass exit from the workplace of highly educated mothers, the mommy blogosphere was raging at veteran reporter Leslie Bennetts for stressing the risks of wifely dependency in *The Feminine Mistake* and faux stay-home mom Caitlin Flanagan was warning women their kids wouldn't love them *quite so much* if they had jobs. Now it turns out that what *New York Times* reporter Lisa Belkin christened "the opt-out revolution" in 2003 was never the mighty trend she claimed. According to the 2007 census, stay-home moms are disproportionately younger, less educated, low-income, Latina and foreign-born. Well, that makes sense, doesn't it? That mothers who have a hard time getting stable jobs with decent pay and conditions would stay home if they could, while those who can get better jobs at higher pay would have more incentive to keep working?

Hard on the heels of this revelation comes another: the big headline from *A Woman's Nation Changes Everything*, a major report by Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress, is that for the first time in our history, women are now 50 percent of the paid workforce. And they aren't working just to buy Christmas presents: four in ten mothers are primary breadwinners (that includes single mothers); among women generally, 80 percent contribute a major chunk of the family income. Shriver's claim that "the Battle Between the Sexes is over" is overly optimistic: her own polls show women sense much more discrimination, at work and in the home, than men believe exists. But they also show that majorities accept working mothers, and even women earning more than their husbands. And yet, the report notes, although "workplaces are no longer the domain of men," our society is still organized as if they were, with everything from doctors' office hours to school schedules to Social Security organized around the outmoded stay-home mom/breadwinner dad model. This is not exactly news, of course—how long have feminists been pointing this out?—but maybe our mighty numbers can finally get us some daycare.

The Shriver report's central point is a truism of women's history: women's social, economic and political power is directly related to their presence in the workforce. The gains of the last forty years—in political representation, reproductive rights, education, combating violence against women—would never have happened without the steady and massive increase in the number of working women and the transformative effects of all those paychecks. Some might be tempted to spin the magic 50 percent to suggest that feminism's job is done. First it was dead because it was a failure; now it's dead because it was such a success.

Maybe too much of a success. As Reihan Salam worries in his article "The Death of Macho," "The problem of macho run amok and excessively compensated is now giving way to macho unemployed and undirected—a different but possibly just as destructive phenomenon." If 78 percent of those who have lost their jobs in this recession are men, that must mean women's gains are coming at men's expense, right? Actually, no. Women may have a bigger slice of a shrunken pie, but because the labor force is still quite gender-segregated, mostly they are not competing with men for work. The top ten jobs for women are, in order, secretary, nurse, elementary- and middle-school teacher, cashier, retail salesperson, health aide, retail supervisor, waitress, bookkeeper and receptionist. Men have lost more jobs than women in the recession because the ax has fallen more sharply in heavily male fields like construction and manufacturing than in female ones like healthcare and clerical work. As economist Barbara Bergmann wrote in an unpublished letter to the *New York Times*, "An important reason for the failure to reduce the gap between women's and men's average wages is that little progress has been made in reducing gender segregation in jobs that do not require a college degree." Interestingly, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, on the professional end of the workforce, where men and women are more likely to have the same or similar jobs, as many women as men have been laid off.

It is indeed remarkable that women are half the workforce, but there'd be more to cheer about if they also earned an equal share of the pay. It may be easier to find a job as a home health aide than a welder, but male jobs tend to pay a lot more than female ones (and, one might add, do not involve a lot of deferential smiling). Men are still paid more, and promoted more, in virtually every field. American women are also the only women in the industrialized West with no legally mandated paid maternity leave. Mothers have half the chance of being hired as childless women, and for every two years they spend at home, they lose 10 percent of income—for life. In a recent *New York Times Magazine* piece, Belkin manages to note these and other dispiriting facts without ever acknowledging that it was her piece, "The Opt-Out Revolution," that promoted, to much acclaim, both the notion that women don't "run the world" because "they don't want to" and the wacky idea that by quitting their jobs to tend the home, elite mothers would force employers hungry for their skills to make a family-friendly workplace. Neither is true. In a *Washington Post* online discussion of the census figures on stay-home mothers, sociologist Pamela Stone wrote, "The women I studied were NOT returning home primarily for family reasons, but were effectively being shut out of their jobs once they became moms." As for flextime, shared jobs and other innovations Belkin thought employers would adopt to lure high-skilled mothers back to work, the recession has made such accommodations, always rare, unnecessary.

A woman's nation? Hardly. But not quite a man's world anymore either. ■

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On September 23, Nation *editor Katrina vanden Heuvel and her husband, Stephen F. Cohen, a contributing editor, interviewed former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev at his foundation in Moscow. With the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall approaching, we believed that the leader most responsible for that historic event should be heard, on his own terms, in the United States. As readers will see, the discussion became much more wide-ranging.* *—The Editors*

KVH/SFC: Historic events quickly generate historical myths. In the United States it is said that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of a divided Europe was caused by a democratic revolution in Eastern Europe or by American power, or both. What is your response?

MG: Those developments were the result of perestroika in the Soviet Union, where democratic changes had reached the point by March 1989 that for the first time in Russia's history democratic, competitive elections took place. You remember how enthusiastically people participated in those elections for a new Soviet Congress. And as a result thirty-five regional Communist Party secretaries were defeated. By the way, of the deputies elected, 84 percent were Communists, because there were a lot of ordinary people in the party—workers and intellectuals.

On the day after the elections, I met with the Politburo, and said, "I congratulate you!" They were very upset. Several replied, "For what?" I explained, "This is a victory for perestroika. We are touching the lives of people. Things are difficult for them now, but nonetheless they voted for Communists." Suddenly one Politburo member replied, "And what kind of Communists are they!" Those elections were very important. They meant that movement was under way toward democracy, glasnost and pluralism.

Analogous processes were also under way in Eastern and Central Europe. On the day I became Soviet leader, in March 1985, I had a special meeting with the leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries, and told them: "You are independent, and we are independent. You are responsible for your policies, we are responsible for ours. We will not intervene in your affairs, I promise you." And we did not intervene, not once, not even when they later asked us to. Under the influence of perestroika, their societies began to take action. Perestroika was a democratic transformation, which the Soviet Union needed. And my policy of nonintervention in Central and Eastern Europe was crucial. Just imagine, in East Germany alone there were more than 300,000 Soviet troops armed to the teeth—elite troops, specially selected! And yet, a process of change began there, and in the other countries, too. People began to make choices, which was their natural right.

But the problem of a divided Germany remained. The German people perceived the situation as abnormal, and I shared their attitude. Both in West and East Germany new governments were formed and new relations between them established. I think if the East German leader Erich Honecker had not been so stubborn—we all suffer from this illness, including the person you are interviewing—he would have introduced democratic changes. But the East German leaders did not initiate their own perestroika. Thus a struggle broke out in their country.

The Germans are a very capable nation. Even after what they had experienced under Hitler and later, they demon-

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strated that they could build a new democratic country. If Honecker had taken advantage of his people's capabilities, democratic and economic reforms could have been introduced that might have led to a different outcome.

I saw this myself. On October 7, 1989, I was reviewing a parade in East Germany with Honecker and other representatives of the Warsaw Pact countries. Groups from twenty-eight different regions of East Germany were marching by with torches, slogans on banners, shouts and songs. The former prime minister of Poland, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, asked me if I understood German. "Enough to read what's written on the banners. They're talking about perestroika. They're talking about democracy and change. They're saying, 'Gorbachev, stay in our country!'" Then Rakowski remarked, "If it's true that these are representatives of people from twenty-eight regions of the country, it means the end." I said, "I think you're right."

KVH/SFC: That is, after the Soviet elections in March 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall was inevitable?

MG: Absolutely!

KVH/SFC: Did you already foresee the outcome?

MG: Everyone claims to have foreseen things. In June 1989 I met with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and we then held a press conference. Reporters asked if we had discussed the German question. My answer was, "History gave rise to this problem, and history will resolve it. That is my opinion. If you ask Chancellor Kohl, he will tell you it is a problem for the twenty-first century."

I also met with the East German Communist leaders, and told them again, "This is your affair and you have the responsibility to decide." But I also warned them, "What does experience teach us? He who is late loses." If they had taken the road of reform, of gradual change—if there had been some sort of agreement or treaty between the two parts of Germany, some sort of financial agreement, some confederation, a more gradual reunification would have been possible. But in 1989–90, all Germans, both in the East and the West, were saying, "Do it immediately." They were afraid the opportunity would be missed.

KVH/SFC: A closely related question: when did the cold war actually end? In the United States, there are several answers: in 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down; in 1990–91, after the reunification of Germany; and the most popular, even orthodox, answer, is that the cold war ended only when the Soviet Union ended, in December 1991.

MG: No. If President Ronald Reagan and I had not succeeded in signing disarmament agreements and normalizing our relations in 1985–88, the later developments would have been unimaginable. But what happened between Reagan and me would also have been unimaginable if earlier we had not begun perestroika in the Soviet Union. Without perestroika, the cold war simply would not have ended. But the world could not continue developing as it had, with the stark menace of nuclear war ever present.

Sometimes people ask me why I began perestroika. Were the causes basically domestic or foreign? The domestic reasons were undoubtedly the main ones, but the danger of nuclear war was so serious that it was a no less significant factor. Something had to be done before we destroyed each other. Therefore the big changes that occurred with me and Reagan had tremendous importance. But also that George H.W. Bush, who succeeded Reagan, decided to continue the process. And in December 1989, at our meeting in Malta, Bush and I declared that we were no longer enemies or adversaries.

KVH/SFC: So the cold war ended in December 1989?

MG: I think so.

KVH/SFC: Many people disagree, including some American historians.

MG: Let historians think what they want. But without what I have described, nothing would have resulted. Let me tell you something. George Shultz, Reagan's secretary of state, came to see me two or three years ago. We reminisced for a long time—like old soldiers recalling past battles. I have great respect for Shultz, and I asked him: "Tell me, George, if Reagan had not been president, who could have played his role?" Shultz thought for a while, then said: "At that time there was no one else. Reagan's strength was that he had devoted his whole first term to building up America, to getting rid of all the vacillation that had been sown like seeds. America's spirits had revived. But in order to take these steps toward normalizing relations with the Soviet Union and toward reducing nuclear armaments—there was no one else who could have done that then."

By the way, in 1987, after my first visit to the United States, Vice President Bush accompanied me to the airport, and told me: "Reagan is a conservative. An extreme conservative. All the blockheads and dummies are for him, and when he says that something is necessary, they trust him. But if some Democrat had proposed what Reagan did, with you, they might not have trusted him."

By telling you this, I simply want to give Reagan the credit he deserves. I found dealing with him very difficult. The first time we met, in 1985, after we had talked, my people asked me what I thought of him. "A real dinosaur," I replied. And about me Reagan said, "Gorbachev is a diehard Bolshevik!"

KVH/SFC: A dinosaur and a Bolshevik?

MG: And yet these two people came to historic agreements, because some things must be above ideological convictions. No matter how hard it was for us and no matter how much Reagan and I argued in Geneva in 1985, nevertheless in our appeal to the peoples of the world we wrote: "Nuclear war is inadmissible, and in it there can be no victors." And in 1986, in Reykjavik, we even agreed that nuclear weapons should be abolished. This conception speaks to the maturity of the lead-

Stephen F. Cohen's most recent book is Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War *(Columbia).*

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ers on both sides, not only Reagan but people in the West generally, who reached the correct conclusion that we had to put an end to the cold war.

KVH/SFC: So Americans who say the cold war ended only with the end of the Soviet Union are wrong?

MG: That's because journalists, politicians and historians in your country concluded that the United States won the cold war, but that is a mistake. If the new Soviet leadership and its new foreign policy had not existed, nothing would have happened.

KVH/SFC: In short, Gorbachev, Reagan and the first President Bush ended the cold war?

MG: Yes, in 1989–90. It was not a single action but a process. Bush and I made the declaration at Malta, but Reagan would have had no less grounds for saying that he played a crucial role, because he, together with us, had a fundamental change of attitude. Therefore we were all victors: we all won the cold war because we put a stop to spending $10 trillion on the cold war, on each side.

KVH/SFC: What was most important—the circumstances at that time or the leaders?

MG: The times work through people in history. I'll tell you something else that is very important about what subsequently happened in your country. When people came to the conclusion that they had won the cold war, they concluded that they didn't need to change. Let others change. That point of view is mistaken, and it undermined what we had envisaged for Europe—mutual collective security for everyone and a new world order. All of that was lost because of this muddled thinking in your country, and which has now made it so difficult to work together. World leadership is now understood to mean that America gives the orders.

KVH/SFC: Is that why today, twenty years after you say the cold war ended, the relationship between our two countries is so bad that President Obama says it has to be "reset"? What went wrong?

MG: Even before the end of the cold war, Reagan, Bush and I argued, but we began to eliminate two entire categories of nuclear weapons. We had gone very far, almost to the point when a return to the past was no longer possible. But everything went wrong because perestroika was undermined and there was a change of Russian leadership and a change from our concept of gradual reform to the idea of a sudden leap. For Russian President Boris Yeltsin, ready-made Western recipes were falling into his hands, schemes that supposedly would lead to instant success. He was an adventurist. The fall of the Soviet Union was the key moment that explains everything that happened afterward, including what we have today. As I said, people in your country became dizzy with imagined success: they saw everything as their victory.

In Yeltsin, Washington ended up with a vassal who thought that because of his anticommunism he would be carried in their arms. Delegations came to Russia one after the other, including President Bill Clinton, but then they stopped coming. It turned out no one needed Yeltsin. But by then half of Russia's industries were in ruins, even 60 percent. It was a country with a noncompetitive economy wide open to the world market, and it became slavishly dependent on imports.

How many things were affected! All our plans for a new Europe and a new architecture of mutual security. It all disappeared. Instead, it was proposed that NATO's jurisdiction be extended to the whole world. But then Russia began to revive. The rain of dollars from higher world oil prices opened up new possibilities. Industrial and social problems began to be solved. And Russia began to speak with a firm voice, but Western leaders got angry about that. They had grown accustomed to having Russia just lie there. They thought they could pull the legs right out from under her whenever they wanted.

The moral of the story—and in the West morals are everything—is this: under my leadership, a country began reforms that opened up the possibility of sustained democracy, of escaping from the threat of nuclear war, and more. That country needed aid and support, but it didn't get any. Instead, when things went bad for us, the United States applauded. Once again, this was a calculated attempt to hold Russia back. I am speaking heatedly, but I am telling you what happened.

KVH/SFC: But now Washington is turning to Moscow for help, most urgently perhaps in Afghanistan. Exactly twenty years ago, you ended the Soviet war in Afghanistan. What lessons did you learn that President Obama should heed in making his decisions about Afghanistan?

MG: One was that problems there could not be solved with the use of force. Such attempts inside someone else's country end badly. But even more, it is not acceptable to impose one's own idea of order on another country without taking into account the opinion of the population of that country. My predecessors tried to build socialism in Afghanistan, where everything was in the hands of tribal and clan leaders, or of religious leaders, and where the central government was very weak. What kind of socialism could that have been? It only spoiled our relationship with a country where we had excellent relations during the previous twenty years.

Even today, I am criticized that it took three years for us to withdraw, but we tried to solve the problem through dialogue—with America, with India, with Iran and with both sides in Afghanistan, and we attended an international conference. We didn't simply hitch up our trousers and run for it, but tried to solve the problem politically, with the idea of making Afghanistan a neutral, peaceful country. By the way, when we were getting ready to pull out our troops and were preparing a treaty of withdrawal, what did the Americans do? They supported the idea of giving religious training to young Afghans—that is, the Taliban. As a result, now they are fighting against them. Today, again, not just America and Russia can be involved in solving this problem. All of Afghanistan's neighbors must be involved. Iran cannot be ignored, and it's ill-advised for America not to be on good terms with Iran.

KVH/SFC: Finally, a question about your intellectual-

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BREAK THE SIEGE

The Children of Gaza returned to school this fall with rumbling stomachs and a severe shortage of even the most basic school supplies because of Israel's ongoing blockade. Thousands of families made homeless by the 22-day invasion will spend the winter in tents because reconstruction aid is not allowed into Gaza. Even potable water is in short supply.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government is funding Israel's lockdown of Gaza and occupation of the West Bank to the tune of $3 billion a year—with no penalties attached.

On December 31, tens of thousands of Palestinians—together with people from around the world—will participate in the **Gaza Freedom March**, a march from inside Gaza to the Israeli border to demand an end to the collective punishment of an entire people.

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Gaza

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political biography. One author called you "the man who changed the world." Who or what most changed your own thinking?

MG: Gorbachev never had a guru. I've been involved in politics since 1955, after I finished university, when there was still hunger in my country as a result of World War II. I was formed by those times and by my participation in politics. In addition, I am an intellectually curious person by nature and I understood that many changes were necessary, and that it was necessary to think about them, even if it caused me discomfort. I began to carry out my own inner, spiritual perestroika—a perestroika in my personal views. Along the way, Russian literature and, in fact, all literature, European and American too, had a big influence on me. I was drawn especially to philosophy. And my wife, Raisa, who had read more philosophy than I had, was always there alongside me. I didn't just learn historical facts but tried to put them in a philosophical or conceptual framework.

I began to understand that society needed a new vision—that we must view the world with our eyes open, not just through our personal or private interests. That's how our new thinking of the 1980s began, when we understood that our old viewpoints were not working out. During the nuclear arms race, I was given a gift by an American, a little figure of a goose in flight. I still have it at my dacha. It is a goose that lives in the north of Russia in the summer and in the winter migrates to America. It does that every year regardless of what's happening, on the ground, between you and us. That was the point of this gift and that's why I'm telling you about it.

KVH/SFC: Listening to you, it seems that you became a political heretic in your country.

MG: I think that is true. I want to add that I know America well now, having given speeches to large audiences there regularly. Three years ago I was speaking in the Midwest, and an American asked me this question: "The situation in the United States is developing in a way that alarms us greatly. What would you advise us to do?" I said, "Giving advice, especially to Americans, is not for me." But I did say one general thing: that it seems to me that America needs its own American perestroika. Not ours. We needed ours, but you need yours. The entire audience stood and clapped for five minutes.

KVH/SFC: And do you think President Obama will be the leader of such an American perestroika?

MG: As far as I know, Americans did not make a mistake in electing him. Barack Obama is capable of leading your society on a very high level and of understanding it better than any political figure I know. He is an educated person with a highly developed capacity for dialogue, and that too is very important. So I congratulate you. ■

The Generation That Failed

Yugoslavs were unprepared for the surge of nationalism that followed Tito's communist rule.

by SLAVENKA DRAKULIC

I traveled abroad for the first time in 1958, when I was 9 years old. My family lived in Zadar, a pretty town on the Adriatic coast in Croatia. There was a direct ship line to Ancona, on the Italian side of the coast, where my grandmother and I were picked up by my aunt and uncle in their little Fiat.

KAREN CALDICOTT

In those days it was not a small thing to travel abroad, either from any of the communist bloc countries or, for us, from Yugoslavia. I remember the excitement while I climbed the ship staircase, aware that this trip was something extraordinary and that it was going to take us to a magic place of wealth and beauty. I knew it because from time to time, as proof of the existence of this place, we would receive parcels with fine clothes, toys and chocolates. But I remember far better my first trip to the department store Standa in Naples, where my relatives lived. To a child used to grocery stores with not much food and the Narodni Magazin (People's Store) department stores with not many products, entering Standa felt like entering a dream. Perhaps not even my dreams were as plentiful and colorful as that store. Things I saw there dazzled me.

The best thing about Standa was that just before our visit the store had introduced a new selling system: self-service. It was quite amazing for everybody, not only for a small girl from Yugoslavia, to pick things up by ourselves. At first I just strolled around, not really convinced that I could touch and take into my hands anything I wanted. But when I came to the toy counter, I could not resist touching the dolls. There were many kinds of dolls, but I was interested in those big ones that were popular at the time. A fortunate owner would put it on a bed or a couch as a decoration. All girls envied the lucky one who had it, although she was not supposed to play with it. In its overstated beauty, such a doll somehow personified the entire new world that had opened up

Slavenka Drakulic, a Croatian-born journalist, is the author of several books, including How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed, Café Europa: Life After Communism *and, most recently,* Frida's Bed, *a novel.*

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in front of my eyes. But after getting approval from my aunt to choose one, I could not decide which one I wanted. I agonized for a while and then burst into tears. There were simply too many choices for a child who came from a land with barely any dolls at all.

Perhaps forty years later, I witnessed almost the same scene in Bloomingdale's in New York City. I saw two women from the former Soviet Union, a mother and daughter, buying lingerie. The lingerie department occupied the whole floor, and the two of them wandered around with hands full of bras and panties, looking lost and exhausted. The mother was the first to break down. She just dropped the whole lot on the floor and burst into tears. "I can't choose," she said in despair and collapsed in a chair.

I did not collapse in Standa that day long ago, or on many later occasions. As I continued to travel to the West, I learned how to choose—but for that I needed foreign currency. Foreign currency, however, had to be exchanged on the black market and transferred abroad illegally—say, in a bra. This did not prevent us—the postwar generation—from traveling when it was liberalized in the mid-'60s. On the contrary, my generation made a habit of going to London or some other European metropolis once a year, to buy books and records and clothes. And shoes, for that matter—although for shoes (and bluejeans!) we used to travel no farther than to Italy, mostly to Trieste by car, as it was the closest place to go.

These trips abroad were very important for what happened later on, because they gave us the feeling of being free, being on the same level with Westerners. From such trips we would come back pacified, bribed by our foxy Titoist system. Moreover, we felt superior to our less fortunate neighbors from the communist bloc countries; when we traveled to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary or Bulgaria, we would sell our Triestine jeans for a lot of money.

But we sold ourselves cheaply. When communism fell, Poland had Solidarity and Lech Walesa, Czechoslovakia had Václav Havel, Hungary had Fidesz, Bulgaria had Zhelyu Zhelev—and Yugoslavia had no democratic opposition at all. It seems to me that there is a connection between the fact that we suffered less repression under Tito's soft kind of communism "with a human face" and the fact that no liberal opposition was created, as it was in the countries of the Soviet bloc. The big sin of my generation was that we did not see the need to create an opposition. We failed because we were the last communist believers.

A few years before the breakup of Yugoslavia, the political landscape was already filled with communists-turned-nationalists (like Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman). Nationalism became the only political "alternative" in Yugoslavia, leading us directly to wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Yes, my generation lived too well, and obviously we mistook freedom and democracy for the freedom of shopping in the West. And as in a medieval morality play, we had to pay for that in the three wars to follow: our children fought those wars; they were killed, and their limbs were severed. When I go back in my memory to that day in Standa, I still somehow feel responsible. ■

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Latvia's Tiger Economy Loses Its Bite

The economic meltdown has Latvians reconsidering decades of neoliberal policies.

by KRISTINA RIZGA

Riga, Latvia

Despite his 33 years, Valdis Novikovs still radiates teenage energy and a hunger for adventure. Latvia is a small country (population: 2.2 million), and like a lot of young people who felt suffocated and needed to get out, Novikovs left for England in 2005. He worked as a sous-chef at the Hard Rock Cafe in Birmingham and shared a studio apartment with a Polish roommate. When he went back to Latvia two years later, he barely recognized his own country. The moderately ticking postcommunist economy he'd left behind had turned into a booming engine, propelling rapid changes almost everywhere he looked.

"I come back and everyone around me is buying and selling properties," Novikovs says. "People have two luxury cars. They are traveling all over the world. I'm laboring overtime like a fool in England, but I can't do any of that." Sitting in his apartment in Riga, Novikovs speaks animatedly: "I felt like something gigantic was happening in Latvia, and the train was leaving without me!"

In fact, "something gigantic" *was* happening in Latvia: sweeping across the country was the biggest real estate (and luxury car) bubble in Europe. Less than a year after Latvia joined the European Union in 2004, its growth rate topped all of Europe. As global stock markets overheated and competition for investment opportunities intensified, Scandinavian banks showered Latvia with cheap credit. Eighteen years ago, when Latvia was under Soviet rule, the vast majority of the population had no experience with banking, investments or credit; no one owned property. But by 2005 Latvians could buy everything they ever dreamed of on credit—from teakettles to Bentleys to luxury apartments. As hundreds of office and apartment towers reached skyward, some construction workers started earning more than doctors. Novikovs, who had no experience in construction, got a job as a "plumber's assistant," in addition to managing a Jamaican-inspired restaurant, Coco Loco, at night. He was making more than $2,800 a month in construction alone, twice what he made in England.

Increased earnings and easy credit fueled a hunger for owning property. Oskars Kurdeko felt anxious that by 2007 he still didn't own a home. "All of my friends had already bought their apartments," Kurdeko explains. A percussionist for two local pop-rock bands, Putnu Balle and Tumsa, Kurdeko saw his income shoot up 70 percent that year, fueled by corporate gigs. He took out a $272,000 mortgage on a two-bedroom apartment in Riga with no down payment.

AKIM AGINSKY FOR THE PULITZER CENTER

Valdis Novikovs sells remnants of bankrupt businesses from a rental space in Riga.

But as the global financial storm swept across Europe, the dreams of Latvians like Novikovs and Kurdeko were blown apart. By the end of 2008 Novikovs had lost both his jobs. Kurdeko's monthly mortgage payment now exceeds his pay, and his apartment is worth a fraction of what he owes on it. He's not alone: almost a third of all Latvian households have mortgages for homes or apartments that have dropped 50 percent in value since last year—the deepest plunge in the world, according to the Global Property Guide.

Novikovs now runs a business selling off remnants of other businesses that have closed or gone bankrupt, including his former restaurant. In May his headquarters—a small, dark rental space in a dilapidated Soviet-era building—was packed to the ceiling with more than 800 pairs of imported shoes, which used to sell for $40 but now go for $5. In one room, Italian sports bras piled up on top of a steel refrigerator. Recently, he and his partner started selling wood processing equipment and other machinery, as local manufacturing output continues to drop.

Latvia's economy has been among the worst hit by the global economic crisis, and it is now coping with Europe's second-deepest recession, after Lithuania. Its GDP dropped by an annual 19 percent in the second quarter of 2009. In February 2008 its government requested an emergency bailout loan from the International Monetary Fund. The IMF, with the help of the EU, approved an emergency aid package of more than $10 billion. Per capita,

Kristina Rizga (Kristina@Rizga.com) serves on the Nation *editorial board and is the executive editor of* Wiretap *magazine. She reported from Latvia on a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. Gatis Visnevskis contributed research for this story.*

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How Your Brain Works

Look Inside This Astonishingly Complex Organ with One of the Most Effective Teachers in America

Everything you hear, feel, see, and think is controlled by your brain. It allows you to cope masterfully with your everyday environment, and is capable of producing breathtaking athletic feats, sublime works of art, and profound scientific insights. But its most amazing achievement may be that it can understand itself.

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About Your Professor

Dr. Jeanette Norden is a neuroscientist, Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology in the School of Medicine, and Professor of Neurosciences in the College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Norden has won numerous university and national teaching awards and was the first recipient of the Chair of Teaching Excellence at Vanderbilt.

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it is estimated to be one of the IMF's largest bailout loans.

Outside Riga, among the hardest hit are the large farms, which increased by 25 percent between 2005 and 2007, fueled by easy credit. "It's very hard for large farmers right now, who focused on producing one thing, like milk or grain, and took out large loans to expand their facilities," explains Liga Martuzane, a small farmer in Adazi. Now that the prices of grain and milk have dropped, many farmers are drowning in debt. Martuzane mentions the tragic suicide last year of her friend Gatis Karlovs, who operated a large farm. In February more than 1,000 farmers blocked the streets of Riga with their tractors in anger over the government's failure to protect them from the onslaught of subsidized EU imports, which they believe contributed to their bankruptcy. The protesters forced the resignation of Martins Roze, Latvia's agriculture minister.

On January 13, more than 10,000 people took to the streets to protest spending cuts. A month later, Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis resigned.

The IMF and EU emergency loans have their own downside—they are given on condition of drastic cutbacks in government spending. The Latvian government has agreed to cut about $1 billion from its budget each year until 2012, the year it hopes to adopt the euro. Government officials waited until the day after the June 6 municipal elections to announce 10 percent cuts in pensions and 50 percent cuts to teachers' salaries. They feared the same public reaction that shook the country on January 13.

On that day more than 10,000 people took to the streets to protest spending cuts. What started as peaceful protests turned into the worst riots Latvia has seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis dissolved his center-right government coalition and stepped down in February, but his successor, Valdis Dombrovskis, assembled another center-right cabinet, which has pursued the same fiscal austerity policies. Latvia has since seen four more massive protests, as many Latvians feel that the cuts are arbitrary, without any clear vision or planning, and are directed disproportionately at the masses.

"It just doesn't look to me like the top is making the same sacrifices while they squeeze the bottom," Dagnija Kamerovska, the director of a local homeless shelter, said in May. The Latvian state controller, Inguna Sudraba, came out with a preliminary report in September that found that most large state bureaucracies, which swelled in the boom years, hadn't made the required 20 percent cuts in their salaries.

In the meantime, budget cuts are affecting areas like education and healthcare. On September 6 more than 400 protesters blocked two bridges to oppose the closing of the only hospital in Bauska, a rural city about an hour away from Riga. "Bauska's hospital has been here since the nineteenth century. It lived through both wars, all regime changes.... I don't understand why we have to close it," Bauska's City Council chairman, Valdis Veips, told the Latvian newspaper *Diena*. Instead of explaining the closure, government officials sent in a special unit to break up the protest. A Bauska newspaper reported the next day that city residents had received a government fax stating that financial support for the hospital, though reduced, would continue.

As Latvia prepares to receive the third installment of the $10 billion package from the IMF and the EU, the British *Telegraph* reported on October 5 that Sweden's finance minister, Anders Borg, had told banks secretly to prepare for the collapse of international talks. According to the *Telegraph*, Latvia's government had failed to deliver a 20 percent cut to pensions and a 15 percent cut to public wages, as requested by the lenders.

Meanwhile, the pain and suffering in Latvia continues. Unemployment has already doubled this year, and the IMF reports that more than 10 percent of Latvia's borrowers are over ninety days late on their mortgage payments. Although banks have resisted evicting homeowners, they haven't been totally idle; in June, on an unused airstrip at the Riga airport, more than 500 cars, trucks and bulldozers sat idle, all repossessed by the banks.

Since my mother and I emigrated from Latvia to the United States in 1994, I have visited my homeland every year. As I traveled around Latvia in May, I wondered, How did it get so bad? How did Latvia go from being one of the most developed regions in the Soviet Union to an area experiencing one of the worst depressions in the world?

The trajectory began in 2004, when Latvia formally joined the EU after nine years of negotiations. Credit rating agencies blessed the deal, with Moody's upgrading Latvia from a "stable" to "positive" grade in 2005. According to the Bank Association of Latvia, loans and cheap credit quadrupled from 2004 to 2008, reaching 95 percent of Latvia's GDP by early 2008. Most investment went into the construction of new luxury condos and office buildings—rather than export capacity—under the assumption that real estate values would grow indefinitely. The rest went into buying imported goods, many of them subsidized, weakening Latvia's local manufacturing and export base. By 2007 Latvia had the second-highest trade deficit in the EU, after Bulgaria.

To make matters worse, the real estate bubbles in England and Ireland sucked away local labor. At the same time Valdis Novikovs left for England, an estimated 1.5 percent of Latvia's labor force went abroad. Unemployment dropped to an unprecedented 5 percent in Riga, and from 2006 to 2008 the cost of labor doubled. As inflation tripled, Novikovs noticed that local clothing and food cost almost twice as much as in England. "Latvians were traveling to Germany and Finland to buy cheaper clothes and furniture," he recalls with outrage. In 2007 Latvians had the lowest household savings rate in the EU.

The Latvian government didn't do much to stop this economic transformation. If anything, it stepped on the gas.

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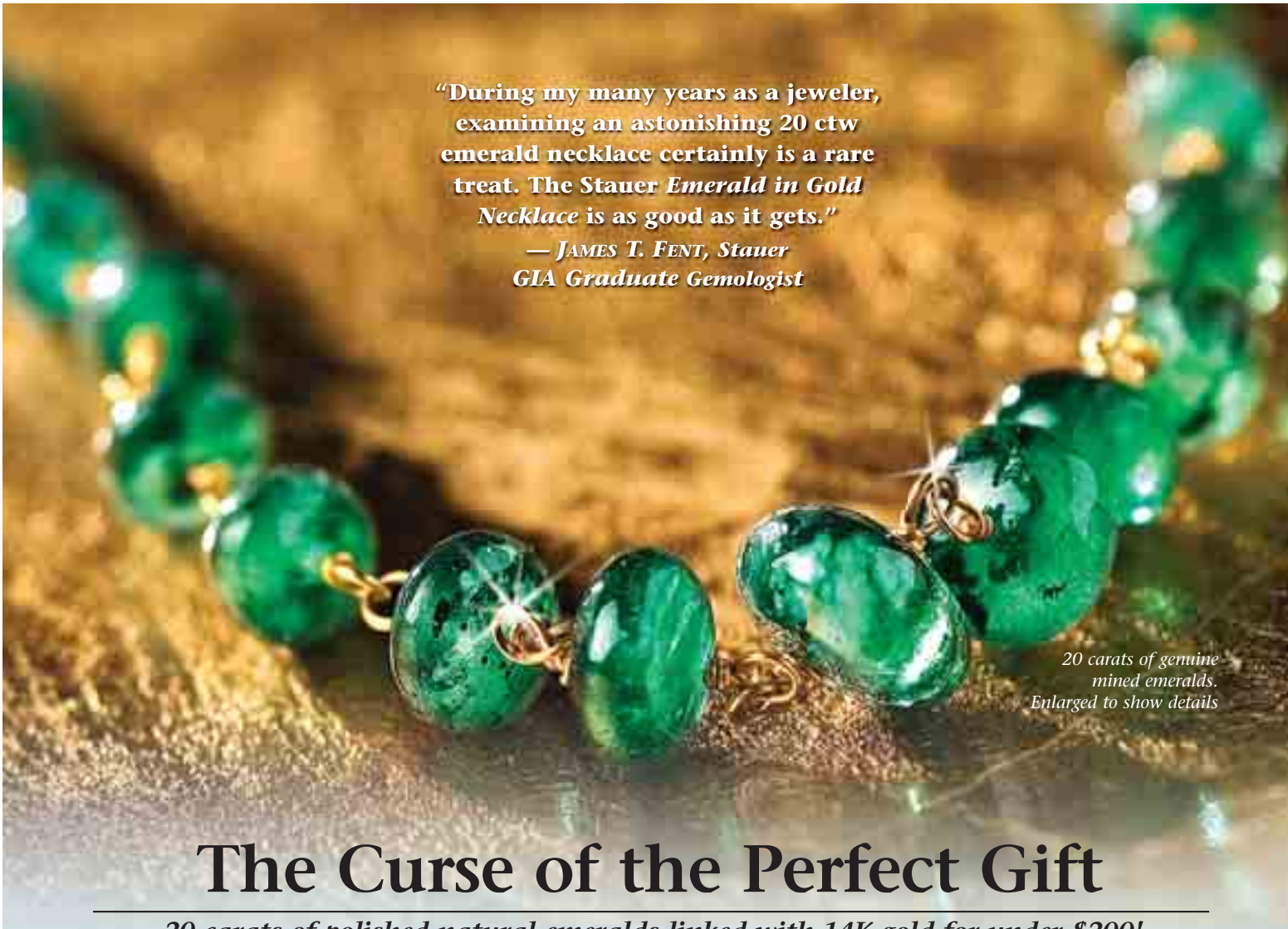
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Riga's new deputy mayor and millionaire Ainars Slesers, who served in the Latvian Parliament during the boom years, coined a phrase that is sure to become a symbol of the prevailing government attitude at the time: *gazi grida* (pedal to the metal). Enabled primarily by foreign banks, Latvia's government created a bubble economy financed by debt without developing sustainable means to pay off these loans. Now Latvia's economy looks like a race car that has smashed into a concrete wall.

While economic indicators are a crucial part of Latvia's story, they don't fully explain why its bubble was the biggest in Europe or why its citizens so fully embraced extreme, *gazi grida* neoliberalism. Latvia's Soviet legacy still drives much of its politics. For centuries, the territories where Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are located served at best as stable colonies and at worst as bloody battlegrounds where major Western and Eastern empires like Germany, Sweden and Russia fought for control. The Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940 is the most recent and painful scar. As many as 200,000 Latvians were imprisoned or deported to Soviet gulags, and for the next fifty years Russian was made the sole official language in all political and economic spheres. In this context independence often took the form of cultural resistance—language, traditions and cultural heritage. My family celebrated summer solstice and Christmas in secret.

I grew up in the small, rural city of Livani, about 100 miles south of Riga. My late father, Peteris Rizga, helped build a new factory, Livanu Majinas, in the early 1970s that helped move Soviets from bloc apartment buildings into modern, single-family houses. My Jewish mother, Fruma, worked in the glass factory Livanu Stikls, which produced some of the most coveted vases and glass in the Soviet Union. Thanks to these and other new factories, rural Livani was transformed into an industrial center. A similar trend of Moscow-driven strategic industrialization took place across Latvia, absorbing laborers and military personnel from other Soviet republics. These waves of migration changed the Latvian share of the population from 75 percent in 1935 to 52 percent by 1989. Today, Latvia has the highest proportion of Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic states, raising the fear of cultural extinction more acutely than in neighboring countries.

In the '80s my mother became very active in the Independence Movement of Latvia. On January 13, 1991, she packed sandwiches, made hot coffee in a thermos and said, "We are going to defend Riga from the Soviet tanks." Thousands of farmers drove their tractors from across the country to use them as shields. Small fires flickered throughout downtown Riga at night, as my mother and I passed out hot coffee. On March 3 of that year, 70 percent of the Latvian public voted in a referendum to support independence, and on August 21 Latvia officially regained its independence. I was 14 then, walking around with an inflated sense of pride and self-importance. My mother and I had helped defeat Russian tanks without any guns.

At the time, Latvians feared that in a full democracy, the Russian-speaking minorities might elect Russian communists back to power. In Riga only about 40 percent of residents were ethnic Latvians; the rest were Russian-speaking minorities—Russians, Belarussians, Ukrainians and other ethnicities. In 1991 the party my mother supported initiated stringent citizenship laws, naturalizing only those who could prove their residence in Latvia before 1940, as well as their descendents. Under these laws, my mother, who had come from Ukraine in 1956, could not become a citizen. She felt betrayed. In 1994 she and I packed our entire life into two suitcases and came to the United States. In the late 1990s the Latvian government started gradually reforming its citizenship laws—and now they are similar to those of the United States—but for years citizenship laws that favored ethnic Latvians kept Russian-speaking minorities from joining the country's political elite.

The reform strategy of the ruling Latvia's Way government during the '90s is often characterized as 'soft shock therapy.'

In its drive to contain Russian influences, the Latvian government also prioritized entry into the EU and NATO, a policy goal that overshadowed other domestic priorities, like stimulating local manufacturing or supporting agriculture. As in most Eastern European bloc countries, Latvia's politicians looked to the West, and the United States especially, for economic models. The resulting reform strategy of the ruling Latvia's Way government during the '90s is often characterized by Western analysts as "soft shock therapy." Latvia has had a flat tax since 1997, and until this year progressive taxation has never been on the agenda of any ruling coalition. The Latvian government also refused to tax capital gains, which turned real estate trading into one of the most lucrative professions in the boom years. This unique confluence of nationalism and neoliberalism took Latvia from the extremes of communism to the extremes of capitalism in less than twenty years.

Nil Ushakov, the newly elected mayor of Riga, believes that Latvian nationalism has allowed politicians to pander to their base and ignore important economic issues. "What is easier, reading EU documents in French and English on how to protect our local sugar refinery, or talk about nationalism?" he asks. "What we have as a result is an economy that's based too heavily on transit, finance and imports, while our huge potentials, such as an educated workforce, manufacturing and agriculture, have been lost."

Unlike its neighbors Estonia and Lithuania, Latvian left-opposition parties have not been a part of the ruling coalition in Parliament since 1991. That has meant that neoliberalism has dominated Latvian politics virtually unchallenged since 1991. Two decades of this unchallenged center-right rule have also fueled high levels of corruption. From 2000 to 2002 several international studies found that Latvia had one of the worst corruption records among its high-ranking government officials in the post-Soviet states. In 2004, when Latvia joined the

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EU, it received more than $1 billion in "structural funds," aimed at developing Latvia's infrastructure—modernizing schools and building roads and bridges, among other things. But along with those funds came a resurgence of the old Soviet-era affliction of bribery.

Delna, an anti-corruption watchdog group, believes there are widespread but hard to trace kickbacks from contractors vying for lucrative government projects. In her stylish glasses and short, spiky hair, Delna's 26-year-old Aiga Grisane looks more like a musician than a legal analyst. Grisane sees direct connections between government corruption and the Latvian real estate bubble. When Grisane monitored land development for two years, for example, she discovered that there was essentially no government regulation of construction development. "In Estonia, if you are building a bunch of skyscrapers, you have to submit a plan for roads, kindergartens, stores. In Latvia, you could do whatever you wanted." Grisane believes such unregulated development inflated Latvia's real estate bubble more than in neighboring Lithuania or Estonia. She observed many cases in Jurmala, a small city near Riga, where city officials passed laws erasing regulation at the last minute without any public scrutiny.

Although the media cover government corruption scandals regularly, high-ranking officials are rarely caught or prosecuted. As a result, many Latvians don't feel like giving their taxes to arrogant and corrupt state officials. Grisane also believes that a widely accepted underground cash economy helped inflate Latvia's bubble. "Most of these construction workers were getting salaries under the table. That definitely contributes to inflation." A 2004 report by the European Commission estimated that about 20 percent of the Latvian workforce operates off the books, compared with only 9 percent in Estonia.

The economic crisis of recent months, along with the January protests and the resignations of two ministers, has been a boon for the left coalition party called the Harmony Center. It now holds the largest share of seats in Riga's City Council, the first time since Latvian independence that the most left-leaning major party has done so. And for the first time since 1991 an ethnic Russian, Nil Ushakov, is the mayor of Latvia's capital, home to 700,000 people, almost a third of the country's population.

The Harmony Center owes its success in large part to the charismatic 33-year-old Ushakov, who represents a new generation—young, progressive, cosmopolitan—with no record of scandals or corruption. A former journalist, Ushakov studied economics in Denmark and speaks five languages. "You can't run your country like a business; you have to treat your country like your family," Ushakov explained in campaign videos.

Ushakov's main opponent for mayor was Ainars Slesers, the millionaire entrepreneur who had coined the phrase *gazi grida*. Riga's residents—ethnic Latvians and Russian-speaking citizens—clearly rejected Slesers's philosophy of unregulated capitalism, and gave Ushakov's party twice as many votes (Slesers became deputy mayor). The People's Party, considered among Latvians the most corrupt, and For Fatherland and Freedom, the most extreme on issues of nationalism, suffered significant losses in the country's June 6 local elections. But the right-wing People's Party still holds the largest share of seats in Parliament, for which elections take place in October 2010.

These changes may signal a new era in Latvia, one in which ethnic divisions become less relevant, nationalism is not a campaign mantra, capitalism is tempered with regulation, and government helps stimulate local businesses while reducing red tape and corruption. In a sense, hope has arisen from crisis. "I like this crisis," says Dagnija Kamerovska, director of a homeless shelter. "People forgot that you need to produce something valuable to get paid. I hope it will change people's attitude toward labor." From entrepreneurs to teachers to farmers and the unemployed, a surprisingly high number of Latvians (about 80 percent) said in May that for the past five years, they've felt that their country was headed in the wrong direction. And despite the hardships of the past year, there is a sense that the current situation will "correct a lot of wrongs."

Kristine Drevina, a 34-year-old member of a new Latvian left-opposition party called Jaunlatvija (New Latvia), sits in a cafe and talks about why she got involved in politics. For the past six years, Drevina worked at the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. But it dawned on her in early 2008 that "the country is going in the wrong direction, and I have no right to complain if I'm not doing something about it." Her party wants to reorient Latvia away from blindly following neoliberalism and focusing on ethnic tensions. "In the current situation, we have definitive proof that you can't let the markets run completely free. The state has to be involved to assure fair rules for everyone and provide safety nets for the most vulnerable."

The crisis has been a boon for the Harmony Center, a left coalition party that now holds the largest share of seats on Riga's City Council.

Like Drevina, most members of the new party are in their 30s and have studied or worked abroad. "New Latvia will be a test for our democracy. Can we rise to power without a long [money] tail behind us?" Drevina says. The party was founded only two months before the municipal elections and has made minimal gains. But it is determined to boost its visibility and membership before the October 2010 parliamentary elections.

Another new entrant into politics is Laura Mikelsone, Delna's director, who stayed away from politics until last year. She worked in the Ministry of Economics and also as a human resources consultant helping colleagues start a business in China. Now, as part of a team of mostly young women who work at Delna, Mikelsone wants to see leadership that is capable of going beyond nationalism and embracing the full complexity of Latvia's history. "I want a Latvian Obama," she laughs.

As new leaders, activists and artists are charting a more sustainable political and economic agenda, a new generation of entrepreneurs is also emerging to seek ways of creating sustain-

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able businesses. One such is the green cosmetics company Madara, founded by three women in their 30s, which makes its products using local resources, from plants to labor. The women launched the company in 2006, raising small amounts of capital through friends, and have opened a new store in the thick of an economic recession.

While these green shoots are springing up across Latvia, the austerity measures imposed by foreign lenders threaten to slowly burn them out, raising the specter of more social unrest this winter. A growing number of ordinary Latvians are criticizing the ways their government is handling the crisis. They point to the fact that while the United States and the European Union are growing their deficits to provide economic stimulus, Latvia is still pursuing the opposite strategy.

I called Valdis Novikovs in October, four months after I left Latvia, to see how his company that sells off the assets of bankrupt businesses was doing. "Our business is growing, and we recently started negotiating sales with Lithuanians and Belorussians," Novikovs says, catching his breath after a long day of work.

Will Latvia survive this crisis? "Latvians will be fine," Novikovs says with confidence. "The thing is, even when you ask a Latvian how he is doing in the best of times, they always say, just 'OK.' They don't shine with optimism like Americans, but that's deceiving," Novikovs explains. "We have seen worse things than this crisis, and we always survived." ■

Exchange

(continued from page 2)

and prohibited from leaving. The girls requested placement in aftercare facilities, where they receive high-quality medical and psychological care, schooling and job training.

IJM, the Obama administration and UN agencies regard law enforcement to remove children from brothels and apprehend those who sell and rape them to be as indispensable for countries like Cambodia as it is for the United States.

HOLLY BURKHALTER
Vice president, government relations
International Justice Mission

MANILA

I was interviewed by Noy Thrupkaew, who claims she made "numerous attempts to find and speak with 'the one' rescued in an IJM intervention," though she never made such a request of me. Had Thrupkaew asked, she could have spoken with, among many others, Eliza, an IJM client rescued by the Philippine National Police in an operation supported by IJM social workers, investigators and lawyers.

Eliza recently wrote this:

"When I was a child, I had one simple dream: to live a happy and decent life with my family. But life seemed so unkind to me. My mother left me to my father when I was only 9 months old. Growing up, my father hurt me physically and emotionally so I ran away. I ended up working in a bar.

"At the age of 14, I earned my own money. I worked to please the sexual desires of my customers. After months of working, I decided to quit. I thought things would change, but soon after, I was raped by four men.

"In 2006, IJM, with the police, came to the place where I was working. They rescued me…and brought me to a government shelter for abused and exploited girls.

"I always thought that to earn a living to support myself and my family, I needed to sell my body and my soul. IJM's support changed all that. I am now finishing school and engaging in small businesses with livelihood assistance from IJM. I never dreamt this to ever be possible. I am just so glad that it is."

CARMELA ANDAL-CASTRO,
Director, Manila field office
International Justice Mission

Thrupkaew Replies

NEW YORK CITY

One of the central preoccupations behind my pieces was not *whether* law enforcement should be a part of counter-trafficking work—although that question has vital implications for understanding how rhetoric and policy on this issue have been constructed—but rather *how*. Police corruption presents a serious challenge to those who work in counter-trafficking, as do punitive laws on migration, prostitution and labor; inadequate or insufficient aftercare facilities and psychological counseling services; and a dearth of economic and educational opportunities for marginalized or impoverished groups. But what severely exacerbates all these challenges to counter-trafficking initiatives are the ways voluntary sex workers and trafficking victims have been denied participation in shaping policies ostensibly meant to help them, and the longstanding history of abuse they have faced at the hands of those charged with protecting and serving them.

Training and capacity-building are insufficient. Establishing independent mechanisms to investigate police brutality and corruption; providing legal representation for trafficking victims and consenting sex workers; and involving them in creating aftercare services, law-enforcement training, and laws and policy on trafficking—among numerous possible modifications—would be vital steps forward for counter-trafficking work.

I do not doubt that IJM has had important successes, helped trafficking victims and made commendable improvements in its work, and I took care to seek out and provide evidence of such whenever I found it. However, I'm less certain of the organization's responses to its critics. Human-rights advocates, trafficking victims and voluntary sex workers have pointed out the problems—deportation, police brutality and disruptions of HIV-education services—that have occurred with intervention-style counter-trafficking work, as documented in reports by Empower Thailand, the Global Alliance for Traffic in Women, the Open Society Institute and USAID, among others. These reports do not present false controversy; rather, they shed light on very real and pressing problems that deserve the attention of an organization with justice at the heart of its mission.

NOY THRUPKAEW

Corrections

Editorial glitches caused two errors to appear in the opening paragraph of Jeremy Scahill's "The ACORN Standard" [Nov. 2].

§ The correct name of the nonpartisan group is Project on Government Oversight.

§ Government contractors paid (not *were* paid) $26 billion in fines.

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Books & the Arts.

Empire Falls

by RONALD GRIGOR SUNY

The end of the story was gruesome—a spray of bullets and a splattering of blood on a wall in central Romania. On Christmas Day 1989, after a hastily arranged trial before a kangaroo court, the deposed Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, were executed by a firing squad. The assembled soldiers, eager to eliminate the despised dictator, were ordered not to aim higher than his chest. The faces of the condemned had to be recognizable after the fact. The country had to see that the communist era was over.

The fall of communism was as decisive a turning point in modern history as the French or Russian revolutions. In 1989 the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe collapsed; the division of Europe symbolized by the Berlin Wall crumbled; the cold war began to recede into historical memory; and more pluralistic, sometimes democratic, states emerged where one-party dictatorships had dominated for four decades. (It was also the bicentennial of the fall of the Bastille.) Statist, ostensibly planned economies yielded to freewheeling capitalist markets; and hopes were raised, momentarily as it turned out, for a "new world order" without debilitating ideological conflicts.

Interpretations of the causes of the collapse of communism and the Soviet empire are becoming as numerous as books on the subject, especially in this, its twentieth-anniversary year. At one extreme are fatalistic accounts that trace the demise of a utopian system structurally flawed at its conception. At the other are highly voluntarist and contingent explanations that focus on the key players—the Polish pope, John Paul II; the determined but inconsistent reformer Mikhail Gorbachev; and an array of actors on both sides of the barricades, from Lech Walesa to Nicolae Ceausescu—who shaped a welter of dynamic and volatile events without ever being able to control them. But the events themselves were so consequential for our own times that few are content to stop with narration, analysis and explanation. Moral and political lessons are to be learned. Judgments about socialism, capitalism, democracy and the social engineering intrinsic to modernity are to be handed down.

The events of 1989 are most often depicted as the failure of socialism. It's a powerful interpretation that has served to discredit alternatives to the capitalist system, which is said to have triumphed, and to bestow upon capitalism an aura of legitimacy based not only on a reading of recent history but also on assumptions about the natural order, not least human nature. Capitalism, it is proposed, is the normal state of human traffic in what people make and value and need; socialism is the deviation. Capitalism responds to the nature of "man"—acquisitiveness, competition, egoism and the insatiable need for more. Socialism stands in the way of initiative, creativity and competition. Going by its nom de guerre, communism, it proposes radical equality in a world of unequals. Therefore, it can be maintained only by the coercive power of an entrenched elite and a repressive state. In the Eastern bloc, once that force was removed and party leaders lost confidence in their right to rule, communism naturally fell, and people's instinctual drives for material accumulation were liberated. Markets won out everywhere, even when democracy did not.

History, however, is always more complicated and messy than the moral and ideological tales it may be called to serve. The

HANSI KRAUSS/AP

The granite head of a Lenin statue as men begin dismantling it in Berlin, November 13, 1991

Revolution 1989
The Fall of the Soviet Empire.
By Victor Sebestyen.
Pantheon. 451 pp. $30.

There Is No Freedom Without Bread!
1989 and the Civil War That Brought Down Communism.
By Constantine Pleshakov.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 289 pp. $26.

Uncivil Society
1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment.
By Stephen Kotkin, with a contribution by Jan T. Gross.
Modern Library. 197 pp. $24.

Ronald Grigor Suny, the Charles Tilly Collegiate Professor of Social and Political History and the director of the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Michigan, is also professor emeritus of political science and history at the University of Chicago. He is the author of The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States *(Oxford) and is currently writing a biography of Stalin.*

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history of Eastern Europe in the second half of the twentieth century can be told as the story of two series of revolutions: the communist-led revolutions of the post–World War II years that ousted the former ruling elites and transformed largely rural societies into urban industrial ones; and the anticommunist revolutions of 1989, mostly peaceful and in one case even "velvet," that overturned entrenched party regimes already weakened by political sclerosis. In Eastern Europe, one form of "actually existing socialism" was established at a particular historical moment—the beginning of the cold war struggle between an enormously wealthy, nuclear-armed United States and a significantly weaker Soviet Union.

How did two empires fall with little effort by the imperial power to prevent their disintegration?

Forty years later, communism fell when political crises, economic stagnation (but not economic collapse) and a will to change the way the system worked coalesced at another historical moment. To the lasting dismay of democratic socialists in Europe and elsewhere, it was a moment of Thatcherite/Reaganite neoliberalism, vigorous anticommunism and muscular military and covert operations against the left and radical movements in all parts of the globe. As for socialism, what originated in the early nineteenth century as a noble political philosophy devoted to promoting the common good was reduced to an epithet hurled at anyone skeptical of the workings of laissez-faire or the idea that capitalism is intrinsic to the natural order. Socialism has a long history, but it has not been able to escape the crushing burden of its recent Leninist incarnation.

The end of the story was also confusing. How did two empires fall—one in Eastern Europe, the other the Soviet Union itself—with little effort by the imperial power to prevent their disintegration? The upheaval and downfall occurred so quickly, so unexpectedly, that journalists could barely keep up with it and scholars were left disoriented. Twenty years on, in *Revolution 1989*, journalist Victor Sebestyen offers an analysis that foregrounds human actors and avoids larger conclusions about the structural factors that contributed to communism's disintegration. Constantine Pleshakov, a historian at Mount Holyoke College, does not shy away from evoking the positive achievements of communist power in order to explain its durability, but most of the story he tells in *There Is No Freedom Without Bread!* is ultimately about the cascade of events, from Poland to Afghanistan, that overwhelmed the creaky "socialist" system and its creaky operators. In *Uncivil Society*, Stephen Kotkin and Jan Gross, historians at Princeton University, offer a deeply structuralist analysis of communism's collapse. Their narrative combines a certainty about the unreformability of state socialism, at least in Eastern Europe, with a preachy confidence in the inevitable triumph of capitalism. For all their differences in tone, perspective and scope, these three books are masterful and reliable accounts of a time when the world turned right side up (no pun intended).

Like the two world wars that preceded it, the cold war began in Eastern Europe, a fragmented frontier between developed industrial capitalism and its agrarian poor relation, still largely peasant, traditionally religious and fiercely nationalist. This was not a particularly hospitable place to launch a socialist revolution à la Marx—especially when that revolution was associated with Russia, the Great Power most resented by Poles, Germans, Hungarians and Romanians. Stalin's USSR was slowly recovering from its costly victory over fascism. It was suspicious of the intentions of its former allies and determined to retain the territorial spoils of the recently concluded war, stretching from its western borders to central Germany. The "East European Revolutions" of the 1940s and '50s were largely, though not entirely, imposed by the Kremlin, and the system eventually built was modeled after the most draconian variant of what has been called socialism, namely the Stalinist command economy and police state.

Realists in the East and West understood that given military conditions and Soviet notions of security, the question of whether capitalism or communism would dominate Eastern Europe was moot. The true question was not *if* but *how* Stalin would control the "liberated" countries. Would they become allied but autonomous states, like Finland, or fully Stalinized and Soviet-manipulated police regimes? At first the Soviets promoted coalition governments and gradual social transitions. The pre-war elites had been discredited by their collaboration with the Nazis, and the politics of most of Eastern Europe gravitated leftward. In Hungary, Poland and Romania, hundreds of thousands of acres of private property were turned over to peasants. In Poland, industry owned by Germans was nationalized. Russians were popular in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, and the same social reforms easily gained support there. But four of the countries taken by the Soviet army—Germany, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria—had been part of the Axis, and they were drained of resources as reparations for the Soviet Union's staggering war losses.

As in the Soviet Union, communists in Eastern Europe were brutal modernizers. Kremlin leaders believed that the security of the USSR went hand in hand with the transformation of the countries on its western border from agrarian to industrial, peasant to proletarian. By the late 1940s any deviance from the strict Soviet form of "revolution from above" led to expulsion from the communist bloc (as in the case of Tito's Yugoslavia); the purging of dissenters; or even the execution of veteran party leaders, including László Rajk in Hungary, Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria and Rudolf Slánský in Czechoslovakia.

In *There Is No Freedom Without Bread!*, Pleshakov introduces the metaphor of civil war to revise conventional accounts of 1989 in Eastern Europe. He argues that if socialism was as fundamentally flawed, and its fall as preordained, as the fatalists say, it would not have lasted as long as it did. The regimes not only survived for forty years but were relatively stable and even enjoyed a degree of popular support, in large part because of what Pleshakov calls "social contracts between the rulers and the ruled": "No Communist state could have done without secret police—but people accepted the state not just because of terror and intimidation, but also because of free health care, free housing, and free education." Dissident Poles may have shouted in 1980, "There is no bread without freedom!" but Pleshakov claims that the reverse was also true. The communists not only expropriated land from the aristocracy and the church but secularized education, provided jobs in new industries and made life and livelihood more secure and predictable. Furthermore, they extended Poland territorially by annexing German lands to compensate for the loss of the eastern part of pre-war Poland that Stalin incorporated into the Soviet Union. They abetted the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia and guaranteed the new borders of the state,

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as well as the independent existence of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks and Poles were not happy with the loss of territory ceded to the USSR and Romania; but the presence of the Soviet Army, along with the internationalist rhetoric of Marxism-Leninism, at least prevented the recurrence of the worst excesses of ethnic nationalism that had long plagued the region. Economies grew in the years after Stalin's death in 1953; energy was cheap, subsidized by Soviet exports; and in general Eastern Europeans lived better in the periphery of empire than most Russians did in its metropole.

For those existing, as we say, "under communism," Pleshakov argues, making a living came first and was for many years almost enough to make the socialist experiment seem gratifying. Even after the "Soviet Union and its version of communism had lost luster," he says, egalitarian Marxism, a more human form of communism without terror or Russians, continued to have broad appeal. But the Kremlin's decision to crush the anti-Stalinist uprisings of 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia left those hopeful for another kind of socialism feeling bewildered, if not betrayed. What they got was "vegetarian" communism or (for the omnivores) "goulash communism"—more goods, some travel abroad, less repression, but only the most muted voice in politics. By the early '70s the regimes looked stable, relatively prosperous and likely to endure. But the command economy by itself couldn't uphold the social contract: East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Romania borrowed heavily from the West to maintain an aging industrial base and a standard of living comfortable enough to keep populations relatively quiescent. The debt owed to foreign banks swelled, and a cycle of falling productivity and growing discontent accelerated.

Communist states borrowed heavily from foreign banks to uphold the social contract.

In retrospect, the second round of Eastern European revolutions appears to be the culmination of four crucial events. The first two were the mass strikes of 1970 and 1976 in Poland, which forced the government to make concessions to popular protest and culminated in the formation of Solidarity, the officially recognized independent trade union, in 1980. Eventually Poland's communists could no longer placate the burgeoning workers' movement, and party chief Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski reacted by declaring a "state of war" in December 1981, arresting thousands, Walesa included, and driving Solidarity underground. The third event was the election, in 1978, of Karol Józef Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II. The Kremlin was appalled that a cleric from the Soviet bloc had been elevated to a position of global influence. The pope did not have any armored divisions at his command, but his moral authority at home and abroad translated into what Marxists understood to be a "material force." Soon hundreds of thousands of civilians would be on the street or on strike, inspired by John Paul II's refusal to compromise with Marxism. Money from US intelligence agencies, funneled secretly through Western labor organizations and the church, helped to fuel the movement. The fourth event was the most unpredictable: the selection of Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's radical reforms turned, step by step, into a revolution that crippled the party and dissolved state authority. His greatest gift to the USSR's satellite states was to restore their sovereignty and pledge not to interfere in their affairs. To the dismay of hardliners like Erich Honecker in East Germany, the Soviets refused to back up former client states facing popular protests.

With sharply drawn anecdotes, Victor Sebestyen relates in *Revolution 1989* what happened when a reluctant Gorbachev traveled to East Berlin in early October 1989 to observe the fortieth anniversary of the GDR. In his public remarks the Soviet leader pointedly turned to Honecker and warned, "Life punishes those who fall behind." That evening, as the two party leaders watched what was billed as a celebratory torchlight parade, blue-shirted, red-scarved Communist Youth marched by the dignitaries' podium pleading, "Gorby, help us; Gorby, help us." The rot had penetrated so deeply that even the sons and daughters of the elite were calling for radical reform. For two weeks the party and state apparatus floundered in the face of demonstrators, but Gorbachev ordered the 380,000 Soviet troops stationed in East Germany to remain in their barracks. Meanwhile, in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, communists and opposition figures held roundtable discussions to negotiate free elections in those countries and eventually the transfer of power.

Less dramatic than crowds in the street but equally devastating was the accelerating payments crisis faced by the communist states that had been borrowing heavily from foreign banks for decades. After they conspired to remove Honecker as party boss in mid-October, German Politburo members were shocked to learn that the country was essentially bankrupt. But when Egon Krenz, the new party boss and Honecker clone, went hat in hand to Moscow, Gorbachev brushed him off: "We are in no position to offer assistance, not in the USSR's present condition." On November 9, 1989, an East German party spokesman answering a question from NBC's Tom Brokaw about the new travel policy for East Germans mistakenly stated that it was now possible for people to cross the border freely. (The spokesman had meant to say that the old visa restrictions were being lifted and that people could apply for passes allowing them to cross.) Within hours, thousands gathered at the wall. They climbed over it, danced on top of it and began tearing it apart. For many in Russia, the sense of national security they had gained from the Soviet army's westward advances in 1945 was buried in the rubble.

To paraphrase that master of revolution Vladimir Lenin, a revolutionary situation exists when society is no longer willing to be ruled in the old way and the ruling elites are no longer able to rule in the old way. While not all such situations end in successful revolution, the outcomes in Eastern Europe were for the most part positive. What would soon be called "transitions to democracy" (and would later spawn a new subdiscipline of political science—transitology!) were not uniformly democratic in process; but most of the transitions did result in the formation of states that were democratic in character (in contrast to most of the successor states created from the former Soviet Union). Three distinct patterns emerged: the roundtable negotiations between the communist ancien régime and the opposition (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia); coups d'état within the innermost communist circles (East Germany, Bulgaria); and a revolution from below that forced regime insiders to unseat the leader (Romania). Efforts to preserve communist power with truncheons or bullets failed in Leipzig, Prague and Timisoara, and ultimately the "dumpling-faced" party bosses lost the will and ability to rule in the old way. In Poland there was a progressive erosion of popular support and the simultaneous loss of

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confidence by the elite, a dynamic that spilled into Hungary, then Germany and Czechoslovakia, and finally Bulgaria and Romania. In *Uncivil Society*, Kotkin and Gross liken the revolutions in the GDR and Romania to "bank runs." When the government wavered, masses of people took to the streets and withdrew their acquiescence to the system. In Hungary and Poland, by contrast, there were negotiated shifts of power. Even the timetables differed from state to state. As scholar-journalist Timothy Garton Ash put it, "In Poland it took ten years; in East Germany ten weeks; in Czechoslovakia ten days."

For the self-proclaimed "socialists" of the communist regimes, everything from the reforms of Gorbachev to the tearing down of the wall was evidence not of revolution but a counterrevolution bent on the abolition of socialism. In November 1989, the Czech politician Alexander Dubcek, the hero of 1968 who had championed "socialism with a human face," spoke at a press conference in Prague and proposed a reformed socialism. The man of the hour, playwright and dissident Václav Havel, interjected, "'Socialism' is a word that has lost its meaning in our country." For Havel, socialism was identified with the regime that he and his supporters were seeking to overthrow. Dubcek had failed—as Gorbachev would two years later—to comprehend how far the popular mood had shifted away from his shopworn ideals. At the very moment that Havel and Dubcek shared the microphones, it was announced that the entire communist leadership of Czechoslovakia had resigned, and all forms of socialism, from communist statism to Dubcek's Social Democracy, seemed to melt into the air.

As the drama of 1989 moved toward a denouement in Eastern Europe, in the USSR reform was rapidly mutating into revolution. Gorbachev's promotion of elected bodies—the Congress of People's Deputies and, later, elected soviets—shifted power from the Communist Party to broad parliamentary institutions. Politics moved from the cloistered offices of high party officials into the spotlight of unscripted televised debates. The Soviet Union lasted two more years before disintegrating into fifteen separate states, but by 1989 the communist system of a single governing party and a command economy all operating under strict censorship had vanished. What had once been an ironclad freighter labeled "totalitarianism" was being replaced daily by a jerry-built ship at sea, hardly seaworthy and already foundering in the turbulent waters of economic crisis.

Gorbachev called his project of perestroika (rebuilding) a "revolution," even though he did not anticipate the loss of power by the party he headed. He probably intended to eliminate the communist system but wanted neither the end of socialism, which he defined as a politics dependent on and requiring democracy, nor of the USSR. And he certainly did not anticipate the precipitous rejection of party rule in Eastern Europe. (As Stephen F. Cohen has pointed out in an essay on the reformability of the Soviet system, the pessimists doubted the system could be reformed, because it would cease to be the Soviet system—a tautological statement. That, of course, was always the revolutionary potential of a radical reform from above.) But after Gorbachev had successfully reformed the system out of existence and set adrift the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, the example of decolonization became a powerful incentive, first to dissident nationalists in Armenia, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and later to communists in the non-Russian republics. Even the old communist Boris Yeltsin discovered the political advantages of nationalism: after repeatedly defending the integrity of the Soviet Union, in 1991 he conspired with the leaders of Belarus and Ukraine to bring down the Soviet state, and Gorbachev with it.

Kotkin and Gross argue that the establishment—an 'uncivil society'—brought itself down.

In the last few years of Soviet power, Gorbachev was not only unwilling to use force to retain control of the Eastern European states but extremely reluctant to use coercion against recalcitrant and rebellious Soviet citizens to compel them to obey existing laws and to prevent separatism. Violent suppression of demonstrations and protests and even pogroms occurred in Georgia, the Baltic republics and Azerbaijan, but the use of the police or army was intermittent, hesitant and usually followed by concessions or apologies. Gorbachev, it turned out, did not have the "iron teeth" that Andrei Gromyko, in nominating him to the highest post in the land, had promised he possessed. Revolutions are almost always accompanied by violence and often followed by civil wars. Lenin unhesitatingly called for civil war when he was struggling for power and used terror as a tool for state-building. Unlike another state preserver, Abraham Lincoln, Gorbachev was reluctant to use the military and political instruments at hand to keep his union intact.

Kotkin and Gross argue against the cherished notion that an organized revolution from below occurred in Eastern Europe. They view Poland as an exception, but this caveat does not lead them to grant Poland the central role cast for it by Pleshakov and Sebestyen, who see the Polish workers' rebellion in 1980 as creating an existential dilemma for the Soviets. With the Soviet army engaged in Afghanistan, sending troops into Poland was unthinkable for Moscow. Since the Polish party could no longer rule in the old way, party chief General Jaruzelski was forced to declare a "state of war." Poland was certainly unique, and according to Kotkin and Gross, more common was the process of "nonorganized mobilization," most evident on those December days in Bucharest when a lone voice was sufficient to turn a crowd against Ceausescu.

Mobilization against the state in Eastern Europe, they go on to argue, did not happen in or because of civil society, that imagined community of anticommunist dissidents of the 1970s and '80s: "Needless to say, in 1989 'civil society' could not have shattered Soviet-style socialism for the simple reason that civil society in Eastern Europe did not then actually exist." Dissidents a civil society do not make. Instead, "it was the establishment—the 'uncivil society'—that brought down its own system." Totalitarianism, in Kotkin and Gross's view, made civil society impossible. That extra-state arena of "people taking responsibility for themselves" with "recourse to state institutions to defend associationism, civil liberties, and private property" was a mirage. Poland's Solidarity mesmerized Eastern Europe, but in no other Soviet bloc country were citizens able to repeat its successes. "Uncivil society" constituted a world of structural incompetence. The Soviet system itself, its practices of secrecy and coercion, its culture of suspicion, promoted the loyal rather than the capable, the submissive rather than the innovative, the risk-averse rather than the creative. Communist regimes in Eastern Europe fell because the elites were unable to change their ways; Gorbachev refused to support them and demanded that they reform. When the "uncivil society" of an illiberal state was no longer able to manipulate or even gauge

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the mood of its own people, it found itself bereft of the most basic instruments of government.

Kotkin and Gross provide an intriguing revision of the usual narrative of mobilized popular resistance to "actually existing socialism." Highlighting the failures at the top is key to understanding the collapse of communism, but that emphasis must be supplemented by attention to what went on below. Both organized popular resistance in Poland and more spontaneous mass mobilization in most of the other socialist states, as Pleshakov and Sebestyen extensively and persuasively demonstrate, contributed to the crises that made the communist regimes unsustainable.

Eastern European communists promised something besides social justice and equality; to their own detriment they also promised greater prosperity and productivity than was possible under capitalism. Khrushchev repeatedly spoke of "reaching and surpassing America!" This was yet another failure in the face of capitalism. The economies of Soviet bloc countries, themselves eager to incessantly increase output, were ultimately outperformed by the West. Nowhere was this contrast more evident than in Berlin, where the radiance of the western sector outshone the more subdued lights to the east. Not only were the Soviet-style economies unable to compete successfully but, by engaging with the bankers of the West, they became dependent on loans and saddled with onerous debt. The "social contract" trapped the socialist states; they could neither modify the subsidies that underwrote low consumer prices nor use the capitalist weapon of unemployment to restructure their economies. China's "market Leninism" showed one way out—a turn toward capitalism without democratization—but Eastern European communists hesitated to take that path. Even Hungary, the most market-oriented, would not permit labor or capital markets.

Communism, Kotkin and Gross conclude, was unredeemable. The execution, on Christmas Day, of the one remaining dictator in Eastern Europe was for them the salute that marked not only the collapse of the communist establishment but the triumph of capitalism and the failure of socialism. Stripped of the hopes and illusions of earlier years, by 1989 many on the streets agreed with the Polish opposition figure Adam Michnik: "There is no socialism with a human face, only totalitarianism with its teeth knocked out." ■

The Last Yugoslav

by RICHARD BYRNE

Terror and Joy
The Films of Dusan Makavejev.
By Lorraine Mortimer.
Minnesota. 337 pp. $25.

It is one of the most perplexing mysteries of world cinema. In the early 1970s Dusan Makavejev was the brightest star in the avant-garde firmament. A breathless dispatch in the *New York Times* filed from a midnight screening of one of Makavejev's films at the 1971 Cannes Film Festival offers a glimpse of his glow:

> Somewhere along in every film festival there comes that one film that electrifies everyone, that sets everyone from the man in the street to critics to the president of a major American company talking about it with the same passionate enthusiasm.... A standing-room-only audience...cheered and screamed and applauded for a good quarter of an hour at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Makavejev still surfaces occasionally for retrospective interviews and stints on the film-school and festival circuit, but he has not released a film in fifteen years.

His first three features—*Man Is Not a Bird* (1965); *Love Affair, Or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator* (1967); and *Innocence Unprotected* (1968)—were key works of Eastern European cinema that also won international acclaim at the Berlin Film Festival along with a worldwide audience. (These three films were released as a boxed set by Criterion in October.) But it was the release of the film so wildly feted at Cannes in 1971—*WR: Mysteries of the Organism*—that sent Makavejev's burgeoning reputation into orbit. *WR*'s political and libidinal epiphanies about the stalemated cold war were propelled by a dazzling kinesis of cinematic forms. Its clever leaps between documentary, doomed love story, agitprop and farce created revelatory juxtapositions: Nazi documentaries about the mentally ill collide with hagiographies of Stalin; street theater in New York City jostles with a documentary on the life of psychologist Wilhelm Reich. The film radiates a manic, subversive and inquisitive energy and carnality.

WR's scathing anti-authoritarianism did not escape the attentions of the authorities. Most countries in the Soviet bloc banned it outright. Yugoslav officials suppressed the film by choking it with red tape and then encouraged its director to make his movies in exile. Genius and notoriety usually ensure success for filmmakers—or at least a chance to keep making films. So what explains Makavejev's mysterious cinematic silence? *Terror and Joy: The Films of Dusan Makavejev*, a new book by Lorraine Mortimer, a senior lecturer of sociology and anthropology at La Trobe University in Melbourne, provides an opportunity to reopen this baffling cold case. Her primary argument is that there are deep connections to be made between Makavejev's films and Yugoslavia's bloody breakup in the 1990s. Her sharp analysis and exacting detail make the book comprehensive and useful, but her overall argument breaks down for reasons both thematic and chronological. Yet Mortimer's instinct to poke into the death of Yugoslavia is on the right track if you're looking to solve this mystery. As it happens, Yugoslavia's demise is also a prime suspect in the disappearance of Makavejev as a cinematic force.

Milena (Milena Dravic) in *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*

Makavejev addressed Yugoslavia's dissolution in his last film, *Hole in the Soul* (1994)—an hourlong autobiographical work made for the BBC. *Hole in the Soul* has all the hallmarks of a Makavejev film. Juxtaposi-

Richard Byrne, a journalist and playwright living in Washington, DC, blogs at Balkans via Bohemia.

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tions and leaps in form abound. Couplets about his happy early childhood in Belgrade jostle with bleak accounts of America's soulless movie industry. A chilly cruise on the Sava River in Belgrade in the company of rock musician Rambo Amadeus ends with Makavejev stating his desire to make a film called *Yugoslavia*. Amadeus delivers a vulgar pitch for cash directly to the camera:

> Bastards, morons, assholes, rich producers, idiots and what-not. You have a top-notcher here. So cough up a couple of hundred million dollars so the man can make his movie and make it right. You'll all die, we'll all die, but the movie will remain. So if you want to go down in history, like the Borgias, the Medicis, and a few other rich families, fork over the loot.

The world never got *Yugoslavia*, so Makavejev must have never gotten any backers. But *Hole in the Soul* hints in flashes at the film Makavejev might have made: there are blackly humoristic accounts of street protests against the rule of Slobodan Milosevic. (One of Makavejev's friends has a cobblestone that almost killed him during a March 1991 riot gilded, just like the cross on the roof of Belgrade's great unfinished cathedral of St. Sava. When Makavejev asks him if he had done it because it did not kill him, his friend replies: "No, because we'll beat them, finally. One day, they'll get hit on the head.") And there's footage of handsome youths diving into the Neretva River from a famous and beautiful Ottoman bridge in Mostar, juxtaposed with video of that same bridge as it is destroyed by Croatian artillery in 1993.

If anyone could make a movie encompassing Yugoslavia and its tragic fate, it would be Makavejev. Born in Belgrade in 1932, the director spent his late childhood and early adolescence in that city during its occupation by the Nazis. He developed an early love of cinema and made a short film as he took a psychology degree at the University of Belgrade. Makavejev's sense of cinema's libidinal and political potential won both the attention of Yugoslav audiences and the wary eye of its leaders from the very start. Censors found a seduction scene between a woman and a statue in one of his first shorts—*Don't Believe in Monuments* (1958)—too erotic and withheld the film from immediate circulation. But Makavejev persisted, graduating from making short films to full-fledged documentaries about the construction of national highways and May Day parades. Acclaim and skirmishes with government watchdogs followed in his wake.

The clashing official responses to Makavejev's work was typical of Yugoslavia. Under President Josip Broz Tito, the country perched carefully between East and West. Tito not only had to navigate that middle course but also keep a lid on Yugoslavia's teeming nationalist tensions, which had contributed to the bloodshed and genocide of World War II. So while Yugoslavia was freer than most of its communist neighbors, those tentative open spaces for intellectuals and artists could be smothered instantly when internal or external political winds changed. Yugoslav professor Mihajlo Mihajlov, for instance, ended up in prison and then on trial in 1965 when his acerbic travelogue from the Soviet Union (later published as *Moscow Summer* by Farrar, Straus and Giroux) bluntly asserted that "the first 'death camps' were not founded by the Germans, but by the Soviets."

Makavejev pranced into that dangerous territory soon enough with *WR*. But his early feature films navigated these Yugoslav contradictions brilliantly, and the contradictions energized his work. His first feature, *Man Is Not a Bird*, retains its cacophonous power more than forty years after its release. The film is a simple but powerful tale of a casual affair between a visiting factory expert and a bored hairdresser, but its evocation of life in an eastern Serbian factory town is saturated with soot and pent-up sexual tension. Abandoning the sound studio, Makavejev shot the film in the factory town of Bor in a plant that processed copper, a decision that lent added urgency to the film's larger questions about tensions within a socialist state: intellectuals versus workers, rationalism against superstition.

Makavejev's next two films, *Love Affair* and *Innocence Unprotected*, commingled documentary and fiction in an even more daring and experimental fashion. In *Love Affair*, a documentary on the Russian Revolution is the prelude to a gentle seductive duet between Hungarian switchboard operator Isabella and her lover Ahmed, a Bosnian ratcatcher. (Ahmed is also woven into a pseudo-documentary about rat control in Belgrade.) Makavejev's interviews with actual sexologists and criminologists seem arrogant and cold when contrasted with the very human fiction of an accidental homicide. Similarly, *Innocence Unprotected* brazenly appropriates Serbia's first talking film—an amateurish black-and-white melodrama made by a street acrobat under the noses of the Nazi occupation—and tints portions of it with bright splashes of color, interviews with the filmmaker and his cohort updating their careers, and footage of the occupation itself. In both films, certain kinds of knowing leave us less enlightened. Didactic histories mutilate the texture of lived experience. But Makavejev's first three films are also a virtual primer on Tito's Yugoslavia: its contradictions, its ethnic hodgepodge and its muddled history of occupation and liberation.

Identity Theft

If you're a down draft, I'm an escaped photograph.
When you're a full moon, children disappear from home.
For every nickel you turn in your fingers a bottle fly
Files its nails. When you see your face reflected, it
Sees you as you once were when you were elsewhere.
When flocks fly for you, you let them scatter your neurons.
When you were a tin can I shot you many times over.
If you're a beggar, I'm turning a corner to face you.
Were you a hatband, were I grosgrain ribbon, would
I invite you to move into my neighborhood forest.
When you're a fox, I'm a fox, we're thinking of stealing something.
You are that tired old porch light someone's left burning.
I'm a shy green moth short on memory and handcuffs.
Silver lines you drew me through have cost me my life.

DARA WIER

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In chapter after chapter of her book, Mortimer relentlessly tries to establish links between Makavejev's films and the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. The chapter on *WR* couples the NATO bombing of the Serbian town of Novi Sad in 1999 with the fact that *WR* was produced in that city. The chapter on *Innocence Protected* opens with an extended meditation on a short film made by Srdjan Vuletic during the siege of Sarajevo and the wounds of the city and its citizens, and then leaps into discussing a disturbing scene from Makavejev's film of a child near death. There is even a six-page "Interlude" that tackles various aspects of the Yugoslav wars through anecdote and political history with no substantive reference to Makavejev's films at all. "I want to come back to the conception of the human being as indeed rational, a maker," Mortimer writes in that section, "but also mad, prone to delusion, both an undoer and a producer of fantasies with consequences ranging from the benign to the truly malignant." That doesn't leave much out at all. If Makavejev had kept making films about Yugoslavia after 1969, Mortimer's argument might be more convincing.

But precisely the opposite happened. Makavejev used his position as a filmmaker from Yugoslavia—the country of the "middle way"—to leap audaciously into a critique of the grand conflict of capitalism and communism. The *WR* in the title of that film stands not only for Freud disciple Wilhelm Reich but for world revolution. Makavejev sought—and commanded—an international stage. Both *WR* and his next film, *Sweet Movie* (1974), share a number of qualities: sexual frankness, political courage and a dazzling array of powerful and disquieting images that prove almost sacramental in distilling the era's competing ideologies into flesh-and-blood characters. Indeed, the two movies are so often linked—and they do belong together, stylistically and thematically—that it is instructive in some ways to examine their differences.

WR's power resides in its relentless interrogations of authority and its power to suppress freedom and dissent. Makavejev approaches Reich's theories—and in particular, Reich's notion that humanity is corroded physically and enslaved politically and morally by its frustrated sexual urges—as an avenue to investigate how power works to keep humanity in chains. What compels human participation in personality cults of a dictator such as Stalin? What happens when the Vietnam War is brought home through satire directly to Manhattan's office buildings? What is the relationship between sexual liberation and political power?

Makavejev provides no answers, just tantalizing clues in cinematic hagiographies of Stalin; the comic street theater of Tuli Kupferberg (founding member of the Fugs), who wanders through Manhattan toting a rifle and helmet; and a fatal romance between a liberated Yugoslav woman named Milena (who conveniently spouts Reichian maxims) and a Russian ice skater who decapitates her with his skate in a spasm of sexual excitement and repulsion. These elements and scores of others—including a documentary on Reich—are sliced and diced together, creating a riot of juxtapositions.

The outsized reaction against the film by Soviet and Yugoslav authorities in part served to obscure Makavejev's stinging critique of capitalism. Communism represses sexuality or channels it into a personality cult. But capitalism? Whether it is Kupferberg comically masturbating his rifle, or the crass commercialization of sex in pornography, or the fetishization of plaster casting, Makavejev's lens lays bare the priapism of war and commerce in American life.

If *WR* is fueled by relentless questioning, *Sweet Movie* feels like the work of a know-it-all.

And despite the savagery of his attack on Soviet communism, Makavejev's documentary on Reich slyly reminds us that it was not communism—which the psychoanalyst embraced in the 1920s and '30s but then bitterly rejected—that ultimately led to Reich's personal destruction. Rather, it was officials at the US Food and Drug Administration, egged on by doctors who believed Reich to be a quack. The chain reaction of bans and prosecutions ended only with Reich's death in jail in 1957 and the immolation of his books in two separate episodes by FDA staffers.

If *WR* is fueled by its relentless questioning, *Sweet Movie* has the air of a filmmaker who knows it all. Yet despite the controversy kicked up by Makavejev's taboo-busting in the film (urination, theatrical castration, a vigorous exploration of childhood sexuality), *Sweet Movie* is at its heart a simpler and much less complex film. *Sweet Movie*'s dual plotlines rigidly parallel the cold war siege lines. And though these narratives are laced with a succession of startling images (nakedness in chocolate, sex, sugar and blood), they are in fact simple and straightforward. Communism is a pirate boat with the face of Marx, piloted by the gorgeous, seductive and murderous Anna Planeta. The evils of capitalism are found in the rise and fall of the virginal Miss Monde 1984 (Carole Laure), who is married off to the fabulously rich but twisted Mr. Kapital (John Vernon, later Dean Wormer of *Animal House* fame) and then runs away into a succession of increasingly savage and demeaning escapades.

In any era, *Sweet Movie* would be powerful stuff. It was banned in even more countries than *WR*, including in Britain, largely because of Anna Planeta's clearly allegorical but very edgy seduction of four young boys and an unbridled scene filmed in the radical self-expression commune run by artist and therapist Otto Muehl. One almost gets the sense that Makavejev is trying to outdo *WR* and ends up somehow overdoing it. Even *Sweet Movie*'s bravest political moment—Makavejev's use of Nazi footage of the exhumation of the Polish victims of a massacre by Russian forces in the Katyn forest, fourteen years before the Russian acknowledgment of the massacre—feels more gestural than integral to the film. *Sweet Movie*'s essential flaw is that it dilutes the complexities that make *WR* so effervescent. Communism seduces and kills. Capitalism degrades humanity and drives it mad. Instead of pursuing questions, the movie is content to rest on those answers.

Numerous critics panned *Sweet Movie* on its release. Mortimer points out that even today, there is a palpable discomfort about the film—even among ardent Makavejev fans such as eminent film scholars Peter Cowie and Ian Christie. (She even uses her flat assertion that "*Sweet Movie* went too far" as a springboard for her own excavation of the film's merits and challenges.) Many writers have suggested that the film's scandals and bans derailed Makavejev's career. A seven-year gap did pass between *Sweet Movie* and *Montenegro* (1981), an engrossing character study of a bored housewife who is culturally and sexually liberated from her bland suburban milieu—indeed, a bit too liberated—by a chance encounter with a group of Balkan expats. (Makavejev also had a minor art house hit in 1985 with *The Coca-Cola Kid*, and in 1988 he directed *Manifesto*, a period comedy adaptation of Émile Zola's novella *For a Night of Love*.)

It is time, however, to return to our mystery—and to Mortimer's insistence on links between Makavejev and Yugoslavia's

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wars. In many ways, *Terror and Joy* seeks to conjure up *Yugoslavia*, that film that Makavejev never made, by using the director's own mash-up techniques and poetic images to tell the story of his career. But there is another story to tell, for Makavejev did make a new movie after *Manifesto*, and he looked not to Yugoslavia—where ethnic tensions were already bubbling openly by 1986, just six years after Tito's death—but once again to the cold war and the Berlin Wall.

That film was released in 1993 as *Gorilla Bathes at Noon*. In an interview with film critic Ray Privett in 2000, Makavejev described how East German President Erich Honecker's declaration that the wall would last fifty or a hundred years inspired him to write the script:

> But while I was preparing this, the Wall fell. Everything became totally chaotic. I didn't want to try shooting a Wall that wasn't there. Then I got a letter from the commission that gave me money that told me that if I wanted to change the story, the money is still waiting for me.

With his improvisatory skills, Makavejev fashioned a film that has only become more profound with the passage of time. The film's portrait of Berlin as a filthy, cold and abandoned siege line of the cold war is compelling. It is a city haunted by the ghosts of its vanishing occupiers.

Many of Makavejev's most useful gambits turn up once again, propelling the tale of a Russian soldier named Viktor Borisovich (Svetozar Cvetkovic), who finds himself left behind in post-wall Berlin by accident when his unit is called home to the Soviet Union. A repurposed Soviet war drama about the Red Army's conquest of Berlin is mined for all its irony and bathos—including a completely fabricated visit to the conquered city by Stalin, whose very appearance on a Berlin tarmac magically reunites a Soviet soldier with his beloved girl from back home under his chilly but benevolent gaze. A documentary about the 1991 removal of a statue of Lenin from East Berlin is deftly woven into the plot. (Borisovich even rides with the massive head as it leaves town.) And, of course, there is the mash-up of sex and politics when Lenin (played by actress Anita Mancic) forcefully seduces Borisovich in a fit of revolutionary ardor.

There is an elegiac ache to *Gorilla Bathes at Noon*—a sort of instant *Ostalgie*. And like *WR*, the film eschews easy answers. In its final scene, Cvetkovic is at the Brandenburg Gate, explicitly identified as an actor, munching on an apple and hawking his uniform to tourists as a souvenir, just as many other castaway Russians in Berlin did at the time. The closing voiceover twists that knife a bit more:

> Where is Viktor Borisovich? I'm asking myself the same question. And I am getting no answer.

With the cold war over, one senses that Makavejev has lost his great theme as well. And even if Makavejev had wanted to return to his roots and explore the messy contradictions of the country that had formed him, the Yugoslavia of his early films had vanished, like Atlantis, in a sea of blood.

Makavejev has talked a great deal in interviews about his Yugoslav identity. He offered my favorite expression of it in 1991, just as the country plunged into war. In an interview with journalist Mark Thompson, later published in that author's travelogue, *A Paper House*, Makavejev sits in the lobby of a Belgrade hotel, talking about the ending of *WR*:

> As Makavejev gathered his papers I put my last question. Did he agree that Milena's failure to humanize her Soviet lover was a prophecy of the failure of a "third way" between West and East?
>
> His eyes popped. "But I believed there *is* a third way, and the third way is Yugoslavia!"

In the new countries carved from Yugoslavia's remains—where linguists busily invented new words to differentiate their languages from the common one they once had shared—Makavejev was forced to shed that identity with which he so closely identified himself. Geographically, he is now a Serbian filmmaker, and not a Yugoslav filmmaker. Or maybe not, if one chooses simply to disappear. One can then, perhaps, remain eternally Yugoslav. ■

The End of the Story?

by LARS T. LIH

The Rise and Fall of Communism
By Archie Brown.
Ecco. 720 pp. $35.99.

Communism did not end in Russia with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. It had already ceased to exist by December 1989: the Communist Party of the Soviet Union no longer played its "leading role," nor was it any longer fit to do so. The rules of the game had changed: the party could no longer relay orders to other social institutions, partly because its central leadership no longer had the power to impose a unified party line. In turn, the end of communism in the Soviet Union led directly to its collapse throughout Eastern Europe. One man is responsible for this essentially peaceful self-liquidation: Mikhail Gorbachev. All other candidates for the title of slayer of the dragon—Ronald Reagan, John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Boris Yeltsin—actually had supporting roles. Those politicians (and domestic problems caused by nationalism and economic stagnation) certainly played a part in the demise of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe, but only insofar as they were enabled by Gorbachev's actions.

This is the story at the heart of Archie Brown's *The Rise and Fall of Communism*. A distinguished British political scientist, Brown was one of the first Kremlin watchers to realize the potential impact of Gorbachev's reforms of the Soviet system, and he became well-known in Western circles as one of Gorbachev's most enthusiastic supporters and most sober and insightful defenders. But his book covers more than the perestroika era. It traverses the history of communism from its origins at the end of the nineteenth century to its establishment in Russia and spread around the globe to its rapid diminishment at the end of the twentieth century. As Brown tells us, a total of thirty-six countries that exist today were under communist rule for a good period of time, and some remain so. Brown examines those countries as well as many communist parties that never achieved power, but his central focus is the Russian experience.

Brown smartly demolishes clichés about the actual causes of the end of communism and the fall of the Soviet Union (two very different topics). The communist system, he explains, had three pillars: the political monopoly of the party-state, the economic monopoly of the command economy and the ideological monopoly of a world-historical mission. None of these existed any longer in the Soviet Union by December 1989. Politi-

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cal pluralism was already a fact by the time of the Nineteenth Party Conference in June 1988. For the first time since the 1920s, political, social and economic groups independent of the party were not suppressed, and they played an active role in society as a whole. Economic activity was no longer effectively coordinated by orders coming from central authorities—although market institutions were not yet in a position to replace central planners, with inevitably chaotic results.

Russia abandoned the communist system primarily because its top leader, Gorbachev, stopped believing in it. Gorbachev emerged from the reform communist tradition, and Brown presents him and other top reformers more as incipient social democrats than "Leninist" communists. In any event, Gorbachev and his team were pure products of the Soviet experience, and his radical reform ideas were defined primarily by the complicated dynamics of Soviet society. The subversive impact of foreign economic success and political freedom—especially when witnessed firsthand by elite Soviet citizens traveling abroad—cannot be discounted, but it was a secondary factor at best.

Up to the spring of 1989, Gorbachev was setting the pace of change, and he consistently sided with the most radical reformers—or rather, he himself was the pre-eminent radical reformer. Beginning in the summer of 1989, an accelerating interactive dynamic between Soviet reform and Eastern European independence transformed the whole region. For a short period in late 1990 and early 1991, Gorbachev played a balancing role between conservatives and reformers, but he resumed a more radical stance in the spring of 1991 by calling for the restructuring of the multinational Soviet Union. That process was cut short by the coup of August 1991 and the rise to power of Boris Yeltsin, whose political ambitions could be satisfied only by a death blow to the Soviet Union. And here Brown's story ends.

Brown is favorably disposed to Reagan, even though he rejects the oft-heard claim that Reagan was responsible for bringing down the "evil empire." For Brown, Reagan's real contribution was his readiness to respond to Gorbachev's desire to move past cold war hostility, despite the knee-jerk skepticism of the Sovietological establishment. Brown shows that the Reagan administration never sought to bring down the Soviet system, and that the bellicose rhetoric of the Reagan era only strengthened the hand of Soviet conservatives. Gorbachev's view of foreign policy as potentially nonzero-sum came from homegrown sources, such as the establishment scientist turned dissident Andrei Sakharov. Brown quotes a warning of Sakharov's published in a book by reformers in 1988: "the Afghanistan adventure [the Soviet invasion in 1979] embodies in itself all the danger and irrationality of a closed totalitarian society." On Gorbachev's orders, the Soviet Union completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989.

Brown also convincingly argues that Gorbachev pushed for reforms not primarily out of a limited desire to "fix the system" but because of his principled rejection of the monopolistic logic of the old system. It crippled Soviet society's ability to respond effectively to new challenges and treated adults as if they were children incapable of choice. But for all that, Brown gives the impression that Gorbachev did not foresee the probable consequences of replacing the gears of a system that was functioning, albeit far from optimally. In the short term, his reforms created an ungainly, unworkable hybrid of the old closed system and the new open system. An absolutist regime is never so vulnerable as when it undertakes reform.

Brown offers a superb account of high politics: Kremlinology without the guesswork.

Brown confesses that he had hardly met any communists before he became professionally interested in communism in the early 1960s, but since then he has met hundreds. These personal encounters and contacts (especially with a generation of reformist communist officials, not only Gorbachev but prominent aides such as Alexander Yakovlev and Georgy Shakhnazarov) are his book's greatest resource. Brown comes across as a good listener, happiest when he can relate what someone told him. Some of the best of these little stories are tucked away in the endnotes. His favorite reading is clearly memoirs, and he makes good use of them as well as of transcripts of high-level party meetings. At his best, Brown offers a superb account of high politics: Kremlinology without the guesswork.

Unfortunately, his book suffers from the limitations of its strengths. Brown's writing comes to life only when the story reaches the 1960s and after, the period when he was making direct contact with communists from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. The early chapters devoted to developments before World War II are perfunctory. Also absent is a considered analysis of how the communist system actually operated politically, economically and ideologically. Brown appears to be a European-style social democrat, who cannot help digressing about how wonderful and superior to communists were the heroes of the British workers' movement, such as Aneurin Bevan. He berates the Soviet Union for falling short, not so much of free-market capitalism as of the Scandinavian-style welfare state. Yet he fails to offer new arguments about key issues such as the relation between the Leninist era and the Stalinist era or the driving forces of the repressive frenzy in 1937–38. The book is marred by a deficit of historical imagination.

Emblematic is Brown's discussion of *The Communist Manifesto*. He mentions—in a footnote—that the work became increasingly influential in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Why? Because of its "resounding phraseology," its "claim to be enunciating a scientific form of socialism, combined with its brevity and readability." Apparently, a bogus claim to be scientific and some tricks of style are all it took for Marx and Engels to win over nineteenth-century readers. In fact, the *Manifesto* makes no "claim to be enunciating a scientific form of socialism." The business about *Wissenschaft* (science) came later, mainly in an effort to capture the intellectual prestige that Marx's *Capital* offered the socialist movement. And even then, Marx and Engels were hardly the only socialists claiming to be scientific. "Bourgeois" political economists of the nineteenth century also showed "scientifically" that socialism was impossible, so socialists needed some equally impressive credentials in order to defend themselves.

The mere claim to be scientific, then, does not explain why Marxism became steadily more dominant within the socialist movement as the century wore on. Perhaps readers were capable of looking at the world around them and judging that the overall description of capitalist dynamics found in the *Manifesto* made more sense of their world than anything else on display. After all, beyond its analysis of the vast historical transformation that its readers found themselves caught up in, the *Manifesto* had a truly inspiring vision of how to achieve socialism. Marxism's nineteenth-century socialist rivals thought that socialism was the answer to the problems of the poor and downtrod-

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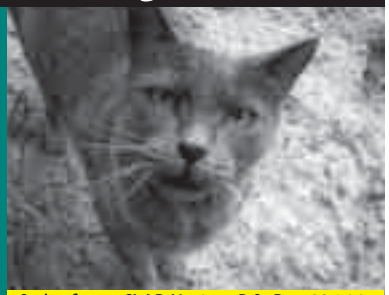
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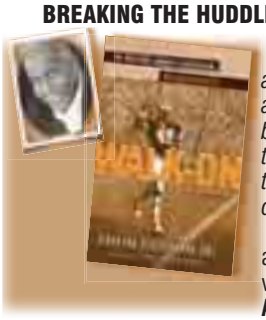
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den, but they did not for a moment think that the poor and downtrodden were capable of something as difficult as introducing socialism. Only the elite could do that.

The Marxist brand of socialism placed its wager on the great unwashed—a wager that looked almost scandalous in 1848, when the *Manifesto* was published. Yet by 1909, the most prominent Marxist of the time, Karl Kautsky, could write that "the elite of the proletariat today forms the strongest, the most far-sighted, most selfless, boldest stratum, and the one united in the largest free organizations, of the nations with European civilization." No doubt the Marxist wager was still romantic and unrealistic, but it was no longer ridiculous.

A fascinating and difficult question about communism is about assessing the quality of life of average Soviet citizens in the post-Stalin era. Brown's answer follows the standard view: Soviet quality of life was vastly inferior to that in the West, materially, politically and spiritually. In a word, freedom was missing. After visiting the Soviet Union, Simone Signoret is said to have remarked, "These happy Soviets, they don't know how miserable they are!" The Soviet Union's challenge was to make sure its citizens never realized this. But they eventually did. The story Brown tells is of their gradual awakening to the vast gulf between their quality of life and that of the average Western citizen.

I find Brown's account plausible, mainly because my contacts have been with Soviet citizens from the same demographic as his: educated professionals and researchers, coupled with (in Brown's case) high officials of a reformist persuasion. Who else would be meeting with Western academics? And what Brown says about the desire of this demographic for more freedom (to read, to travel, to acquire) certainly rings true. But it's not the full story. Neither Brown nor I have a sense of the lived experiences of other types of "average Soviet citizen"—workers, managers, *apparatchiki* (the very name betokens the marginalization of this social type in Western eyes), not to mention those living outside the big cities. Brown hardly even mentions these segments of the Soviet population.

There is one group in the position to make such existential comparisons: émigrés who experienced Soviet conditions but have lived for many years in the West. More or less by accident, I recently came across two accounts of the lived experiences of ordinary people in North America and the Soviet Union. Published by small presses, both books are the work of writers with a non-mainstream point of view. The accurately titled *Apologia for the USSR*, by Anna Makolkin, a Canadian scholar, is published by Anik Press. *Reinventing Collapse: The Soviet Example and American Prospects*, published by New Society, was written by Dmitry Orlov, an engineer who has lived in the United States since the '70s and is a first-class aphorist.

I will leave aside the good marks accorded by Makolkin and Orlov to the USSR in the areas of health and race relations, except to remark that these areas might be more important to the silent majority than the intellectual freedom prized by writers. What's worth noting here is Makolkin's claim that the post-Stalin Soviet workplace offered more freedom than those in the West, or at least North America. Despite limits on criticism of the system as a whole, Makolkin writes, in the Soviet Union "every worker could openly and fearlessly critique one's supervisor, challenge the procedures, the attitudes and work habits of the co-workers, without fear of being dismissed." In contrast, it was a revelation to former Soviet citizens who joined the Western labor force that "one had to be very constrained in one's expression in daily life, they found themselves totally unprepared for the atmosphere of a blind obedience, an unquestionable subordination, passivity and silence in the work place."

My first reaction to Makolkin was incredulity. My second was puzzlement: on what basis can I reject such assertions or even assess them? Certainly, Soviet citizens' growing envy of the West was a fact, though perhaps it was based not only on new information about material standards and freedoms but also on an inability of Soviet citizens (partly because of deep-seated mistrust of official media) to grasp some other, not unimportant aspects of Western life. As it is, Makolkin is the flip side of Signoret: Oh, these miserable Soviets, they didn't know how happy they were! That is, they took for granted the advantages of the Soviet system and just wanted more, and in the end lost the advantages and didn't gain much else. Brown does mention opinion polls showing that Russians think the quality of life in the Soviet Union was best during the Brezhnev era. But he doesn't ask whether facts like these are capable of changing our explanation of the dynamics of the Brezhnev and perestroika eras. Twenty years on, Brown's genial and readable book is a good place to begin to understand the collapse of communism, but it's not the place to end. ■

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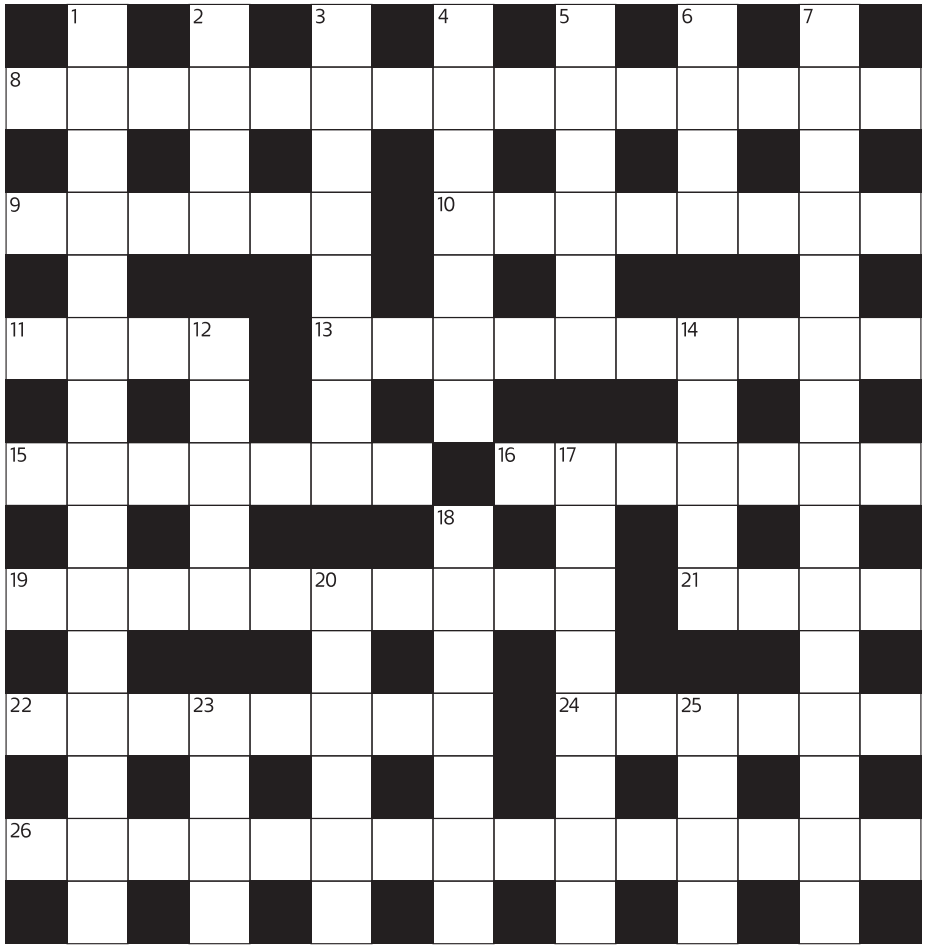

ACROSS

8 Said to be a dangerous thing, but is a small tilt right inside. (1,6,8)

9 The property of having a definite location in a club, i.e., typically exemplified. (6)

10 Old rulers? Oh, a sharp group—but disorganized. (8)

11 Would they be coming out shortly, like an old candidate for president? (4)

13 What's the point in a false sovereign looking after things? (10)

15 Musician who brings back the things like music, painting, etc., to what goes on the side of certain ships. (7)

16 Go ahead! Give me some money! (7)

19 Nile studies and such. (10)

21 It never ends, but in reverse it's game! (4)

22 How your servant spoke of himself in the good old days. (8)

24 Steal from crazy sot those things that do your work! (6)

26 Hecklers might, making a person other than a so-called Charlie. (4,3,1,3,4)

DOWN

1 Certainly not the settled type! (There's a liar about one coming up with it big also, and a tiny portion at that.) (15)

2 Not welcome in your eyes, like a pig-pen, to a point. (4)

3 Young male actors, but the frivolous type. (4-4)

4 Reacted strongly—like, I did this to my wig, man!—as one possibly did with a coin. (7)

5 Such nymphs presided over rivers and streams, and might be found in a sad position. (6)

6 An early one from South America, disguised as Cain. (4)

7 Just barely avoiding danger, during a robbery of your watch? (2,3,4,2,4)

12 Dog-paddled, or crawled quietly, in the bayou. (5)

14 Liam rises to the point of modern communication. (1-4)

17 Dread may discombobulate to make quite the opposite of a nightmare. (8)

18 Chief topic an unruly one—as GM made it. (7)

20 Eleven associated with it, but there are five principal ones. (6)

23 Required now at the tea, I hear, is a number for two. (4)

25 Take this and you're all wet! And you lose your money! (4)

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50 different sets of insurance regulations in 50 states make it difficult, and expensive, to develop innovative products. But with national regulation, consumers would get to choose from the best products available nationwide.

2. MORE FAIRNESS
Today, your car insurance rates are determined by a number of factors, one of which is the state you live in. National regulation would help spread risk more fairly across similar geographic areas.

Allstate does not stand alone in supporting change. **69% of American voters agree that national car and home insurance companies should be regulated at the national level.** Join Allstate in supporting H.R. 1880—the National Insurance Consumer Protection Act. **Learn more at allstate.com/ModernReg.**

Modern regulation is the kind of protection Americans deserve. That's Allstate's Stand.

Allstate. You're in good hands.
Auto
Home
Life
Retirement

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